

SWEETHEARTS

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# Abraham Lincoln before 1860

## Sweethearts

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# LINCOLN LORE

No. 46

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 24, 1930

## LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF  
THE LINCOLN  
HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION



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THE LINCOLN  
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Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

### LINCOLN'S PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE

The possibility of combining the Lincoln and St. Valentine atmospheres, which overlap with but one day intervening, has made the romances of Lincoln popular discussions for the month of February.

The correspondence which passed between Abraham Lincoln, and his closest friend Joshua Speed, during the interval when Lincoln was estranged from Mary Todd, has been given comparatively little attention. Lincoln and Speed were very much disturbed about their love affairs and the letters which Lincoln wrote to his closest friend allow us to learn something about his own philosophy of love.

The following excerpts from his letters prompts one to ask these questions: Is there any evidence that the "fatal first of January, 1841" witnessed anything more than Lincoln calmly advising Mary Todd that he could not carry out his promise to marry her? Is there any evidence that there was a lovers quarrel or a broken wedding scene?

There are two magazine articles which should be read in connection with these exhibits: "The Fatal First of January, 1841" by Mary Leighton Miles published in the Journal of Illinois State Historical Society for May, 1927; and "Lincoln's Hesitancy to Marry," by John Gilmer Speed in the Ladies Home Journal, October, 1895.

Extracts from two letters which Lincoln wrote to John T. Stuart about a year before the Speed correspondence occurred are used to introduce the later exhibits.

#### *Lincoln Letters to Stuart*

Springfield, Illinois  
January 20, 1841

"... I have within the last few days been making an exhibition of myself in the way of hypochondriasm and thereby got an impression that Dr. Henry is necessary to my existence... Pardon me for not writing more; I have not sufficient composure to write a long letter."

Springfield, Illinois  
January 23, 1841

"Yours of the third instant is re-

ceived, and I proceed to answer it as well as I can, though from the deplorable state of my mind at this time, I fear that I shall give you but little satisfaction... I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible. I must die or be better it appears to me."

#### *Lincoln Letters to Speed*

Springfield, Illinois  
February 3, 1842

"I even hope that ere this reaches you, she will have returned with improved and still improving health... Why, Speed, if you did not love her, although you might not wish her death, you would most certainly be resigned to it. Perhaps this point is no longer a question with you and my pertinacious dwelling upon it is a rude intrusion upon your feelings. If so, you must pardon me. You know the hell I have suffered on that point and how tender I am upon it. You know I do not mean wrong. I have been quite clear of 'Hypo' since you left; even better than I was along in the fall. I have seen ——— but once. She seems very cheerful and so I said nothing to her about what we spoke of."

Springfield, Illinois  
February 13, 1842

"When this shall reach you, you will have been Fanny's husband several days... I am now fully convinced that you love her as ardently as you are capable of loving. Your ever being happy in her presence and your intense anxiety about her health, if there were nothing else, would place this beyond all dispute in my mind."

Springfield, Illinois  
February 25, 1842

"I opened the letter with intense anxiety and trepidation, so much so that although it turned out better than I expected, I have hardly yet at a distance of ten hours become calm... I now have no doubt that it is the peculiar misfortune of both you and me to dream dreams of Elysium far exceeding all that anything earthly can realize. Far short of your dreams as you may be, no woman could do more to realize them than that same black-eyed Fanny."

Springfield, Illinois  
March 27, 1842

"It cannot be told how it thrills me with joy to hear you say that you are 'far happier than you ever expected to be.' That much I know is enough. I know you too well to suppose your

expectations were not at least sometimes extravagant, and if the reality exceeds them all I say—Enough, Dear Lord. I am not going beyond the truth when I tell you that the short space it took me to read your last letter gave me more pleasure than the total sum of all I have enjoyed since the fatal first of January 1841. Since then it seems to me I should have been entirely happy but for the never absent idea that there is one still unhappy whom I have contributed to make so. That still kills my soul. I cannot but reproach myself for even wishing to be happy while she is otherwise. She accompanied a large party on the railroad cars to Jacksonville last Monday and on her return spoke so that I heard of it, of having enjoyed the trip exceedingly. God be praised for that... One thing I can tell you which I know you will be glad to hear and that is that I have seen Mary and scrutinized her feelings as well as I could and am fully convinced she is far happier now than she has been for the last fifteen months past."

Springfield, Illinois  
July 4, 1842

"True, that subject is painful to me; but it is not your silence or the silence of all the world that can make me forget it. I acknowledge the correctness of your advice too; but before I resolve to do the one thing or the other, I must gain my confidence in my own ability to keep my resolves when they are made. In that ability you know I once prided myself as the only or chief gem of my character; that gem is lost—how and where you know too well. I have not yet regained it; and until I do, I cannot trust myself in any matter of much importance. I believe now that had you understand my case at the time as well as I understood yours afterwards by the aid you would have given me I should have sailed through clear, but that does not now afford me sufficient confidence to begin that or the like of that again."

Springfield, Illinois  
October, 1842

"... but I began this letter not for what I have been writing but to say something on the subject which you know to be of such infinite solicitude to me... that you are happier now than the day you married her I well know, for without, you could not be living... but I want to ask a close question—'Are you now in feeling as well as judgment glad that you are married as you are?' From anybody but me this would be an imprudent question not to be tolerated; but I know you will pardon it in me. Please answer it quickly as I am impatient to know."



# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
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## SIXTEEN TRADITIONAL LINCOLN SWEETHEARTS

Abraham Lincoln moved to Springfield, Illinois, on April 15, 1837. Three weeks later on May 7, 1837, he wrote this line to Mary Owens, "I have been spoken to by but one woman since I've been here, and would not have been by her, if she could have avoided it." Yet this bashful swain is supposed to have courted to at least sixteen women before his one true love, Mary Todd, accepted him.

### *Covered Wagon Girl*

Once when Abraham was a small boy, a wagon broke down near the Lincoln cabin in Indiana. There was a little girl in the family detained by the accident of the vehicle. Lincoln told a friend of the incident and said he "took a great fancy" to her. As he thought of her as the years passed, he concluded that his affection for her "was the beginning of love" for him.

### *Polly Richardson*

Polly claimed to be Abraham's first sweetheart and once remarked, "Abe wanted me to marry him, but I refused. I suppose if I had known he was to be President some day I'd a' took him." The marriage records of Spencer County show that Polly married Robert Agnew on March 15, 1821, when Abraham Lincoln was but twelve years of age.

### *Elizabeth Tulley*

Elizabeth Tulley was born in Mercer County, Kentucky and came to Spencer County in 1824. She met Lincoln at church and from then on the courtship continued for several months. She claims she was Lincoln's "first regular company." Elizabeth was asked if Lincoln ever proposed to her and she replied, "No, he never proposed, but I could tell from his chat that he wanted to marry me." Miss Tulley later became Mrs. Hession.

### *Sarah Lukins*

We do not know what Sarah's maiden name was, but later she married a Lukins. She told a friend, "I could a' been Abe Lincoln's wife, if I'd wanted to be. Yes sirree, I could a' been the first lady of the land." On being pressed for further particulars about her acquaintance with Lincoln in southern Indiana she said, "Well, Abe took me home from church oncet."

### *Caroline Meeker*

When Abraham Lincoln was working on the Ohio as a ferryman, at the mouth of the Anderson River, he is said to have crossed over to the Kentucky side quite often to call on Caroline Meeker, niece of Squire Pate, whom Lincoln knew. Caroline is one of the seven of Lincoln's sweethearts nominated by Dr. Barton in his book *The Women Lincoln Loved*. About all there was to this affair was the discovery by Caroline of a red ear at a husking bee, and she shyly slipped it to Abraham. Caroline later married Eli Thrasher.

### *Katy Roby*

The name of Katy Roby is more often associated with Lincoln during the Indiana days than any other young lady outside the Lincoln family. She is the one Lincoln befriended in the spelling match and later instructed about astronomy on one moonlight night. However, just about the time Lincoln and Allen Gentry made the flat boat trip to New Orleans, Gentry married Miss Roby on March 19, 1828.

### *Julia Evans*

Julia was the daughter of James Evans, of Princeton, Indiana. In 1828 Abraham took some wool to the town to be carded in the Evans Mill and Julia bowed to him. According to Jesse Weik, "Lincoln was captivated by her beautiful face and figure." One version of the story claims that "Lincoln was repulsed because of his ungainly and awkward appearance."

### *Hannah Gentry*

Hannah was the belle of the community and "a beauty noted for her amiable disposition, and her father was the

richest man in the community." According to the reminiscences of the neighbors in Spencer County, she would have become Mrs. Lincoln, if Abraham had not been "too fond of onions, as she could not endure them." Hannah married John Romine on April 2, 1829.

### *Elizabeth Wood*

This young lady, the daughter of one of Abraham Lincoln's best Indiana friends, was very sure that Lincoln "wanted to become better acquainted with her." Miss Wood claimed that she declined his company because of "his awkwardness and large feet." Elizabeth Wood later married Samuel Hammond on January 10, 1833.

### *Polly Warnick*

Mary Dellard Warnick, called Polly, was the daughter of Mayor Warnick, of Macon County, Illinois. If only the courtship with Polly had taken place during the winter of the deep snow, when Lincoln made his home with the Warnicks for four weeks, there might have been a romance. Polly, however, married Joseph Stevens on June 17, 1830, the summer before the big snow and within three months of the time the Lincolns established their home in Macon County.

### *Martha Wilson*

Miss Wilson was a native of Buncombe County, N. C., where she was born in May 1816. Her parents moved to Sangamon County, Illinois in 1830. It was in the autumn of 1832 that Abraham Lincoln made Martha "a formal offer of marriage." Miss Wilson claimed "a previous attachment" led her to decline his offer.

### *Ann Rutledge*

There does not seem to be any reason for approaching the Rutledge episode with any more seriousness than the stories of the other sixteen "would be" wives of Lincoln. Ann was the daughter of James Rutledge, of New Salem and Sand Ridge, mostly of Sand Ridge, when Lincoln is supposed to have been courting his daughter. We know this for a fact, that when Ann Rutledge died, she was living with her parents in a house owned by John McNamer to whom she was betrothed.

### *Mary Owens*

There was but one young woman, as far as we can learn, who received a proposal of marriage from Abraham Lincoln, previous to his betrothal to Mary Todd, and which can be confirmed by Abraham Lincoln's own writing. The name of this girl was Mary Owens, of Kentucky, sister of Mrs. Bennett Abel, of New Salem, to whom she was paying a visit at the time she was courted by Lincoln in 1836.

### *Mary Frances Vanderberg*

This Mary was a granddaughter of Henry Vanderberg, who was appointed the first judge of the Northwest Territory by President Washington. Miss Vanderberg claimed that it was in 1839 that Abraham Lincoln proposed marriage to her at Quincy, Illinois, where she was then living, but that she rejected him and later married a Mr. Riley. She died in Sioux City, at eighty-five years of age.

### *Matilda Edwards*

Matilda was the charming sister of Ninian Edwards, brother-in-law of Mary Todd. Herndon claims that while courting Mary Todd "a counter attachment to Miss Edwards," who was visiting her brother in Springfield, was partly responsible for Lincoln breaking his engagement with Mary. This is just another one of those Herndon myths, as is clearly revealed in contemporary writings. Matilda later married Newton D. Strong.

### *Sarah Rickard*

Miss Rickard was a sister of Mrs. William Butler, where Lincoln is said to have boarded before his marriage. Herndon made some inquiries about the relationship of Abraham and Sarah and is said to have received a letter from Miss Rickard, then Mrs. Barrett, which contained this statement: "Mr. Lincoln did make a proposal of marriage to me in the summer, or perhaps later, in the year 1840."



1866  
Abraham Lincoln loved Miss Ann Rutledge with all his soul, mind and strength. She loved him as dearly, tenderly and affectionately. They seemed made in heaven for each other, though opposite in many things. As before remarked, she was accidentally, innocently and honestly engaged to A. Lincoln and Mr. — at one and the same time. It is said and thought that the young lady was conditionally promised to Mr. Lincoln, to be consummated upon a release from her first engagement with Mr. —. The primary causes, facts and conditions which led to this complication shall be related to you at another time and place. There is no dishonor in it to any of the three. In her conflicts of honor, duty, love, promises, and womanly engagements — she was taken sick. She struggled, regretted, grieved, become nervous. She ate not, slept not, was taken sick of brain fever, become emaciated, and was fast sinking in the grave. Lincoln wished to see her. She silently prayed to see him. The friends of both parties at first refused the wish and prayer of both, still the wishes and prayers of both prevailed. Mr. Lincoln did go to see her about the 10th day of August, A. D. 1835. The meeting was quite as much as either could hear, and more than Lincoln, with all his coolness and philosophy could endure. The voice, the face, the features of her, the love, sympathy and interview fastened themselves on his heart and soul forever. Heaven only knows what was said by the two. God only knows what was thought. Dr. Jason Duncan, of New Salem, about September, A. D. 1835, had shown and placed in Mr. Lincoln's hands, the poem called in short, now, "Immortality," or properly, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" Remember, Miss Rutledge died on the 25th of August, A. D. 1835, and was buried in the Concord cemetery, six miles north, bearing a little west of New Salem, as stated before. Mr. Lincoln has stated that his heart, sad and broken, was hurried there. He said in addition, to the same friend, "I cannot endure the thought that the sleet and storm, frost and snow of heaven should heat on her grave." He never addressed another woman, in my opinion, "yours affectionately;" and generally and characteristically abstained from the use of the word "love." That word cannot be found more than a half dozen times, if that often, in all his letters and speeches, since that time. I have seen some of his letters to other ladies, but he never says "love." He never ended his letters with "yours affectionately," but signed his name, "your friend, A. Lincoln." Abraham Lincoln was, by nature, more or less, in tendency, abstracted — had the power of continuous concentrated thought. It may be, as alleged, that he was a warm, ardent and more or less impulsive man, before 1835, and of which I give no opinion. He never did care for food — eating mechanically. He sorrowed and grieved, rambled over the hills and through the forests, day and night. He suffered and bore it for a while like a great man — a philosopher. He slept not, he ate not, joyed not. This he did until his body became emaciated and weak, and gave way. His mind wandered from its throne. In his imagination he muttered words to her he loved. His mind, his reason, somewhat dethroned, walked out of itself along the uncolumbed air, and kissed and embraced the shadows and illusions of the heated brain. Love, future happiness, death, sorrow, grief, and pure and perfect despair, the want of sleep, the want of food, a cracked and aching heart, over and intense thought, soon worked a partial wreck of body and of mind. It has been said that Mr. Lincoln became and was totally insane at that time and place. This is not exactly the truth. The dethronement of his reason was only partial, and could alone he detected by his closest friends, and sharpest observers, through the abruptness of his sentences, and the sharp contrasts of his ideas and language. To give you a fair idea, an exact one of his then true mental state and condition imagine Mr. Lincoln situated as I have attempted to describe. Mr. Lincoln had a strong mind, a clear and distinct one. His style and mode of expression in 1835, were entirely different from what they were from 1853 to 1864. He had more, much more, emotion, fancy and imagination, in 1835, when he was 26 years of age, than he had in 1858 to 1864, when he was 47 to 55 years of age. He grew stronger as he grew older. Did this dread calamity, of which I have spoken, crush him and thus modify, if it did not change, his nature? It must be expected that his expressions would follow truly his own rational thoughts in part only, not wholly so in logic, at least. His utterances and expressions would be necessarily disconnected and sharply contrasted. It is said, and I believe it, that he lost his logical

and effect, and

New Salem & Ann Rutledge,  
Hemlock

TX 1926 n (4)

Fragment of broadside

Complete copy in vault

COMPLETE BROADSIDE IS ITEM  
71-2009-084.03502 AND IS ONLINE  
IN INTERNET ARCHIVE.  
1910 REPRINT ALSO ONLINE

## MR. LINCOLN'S FIRST LOVE.

### A Visit to the Lady Who Would Not Marry a Future President.

Special Correspondence of the Globe-Democrat.

HONEY GROVE, TEX., July 12.—A country correspondent of the *Semi-Weekly Texas Citizen*, published here, furnished the following item to his paper of yesterday: 1488

Mrs. William Drenan, a respectable lady of this county, once refused to marry Abraham Lincoln, who was afterwards President.

Wishing to know if the statement made by the correspondent would "wash," and having a curiosity to see and talk to a lady who had been offered, and declined, an alliance with the martyr President, a *GLOBE-DEMOCRAT* reporter and friend this morning started out in search of the residence of the lady in question.

It had rained the night before, and although we were seated behind a splendid livery team, which the proprietor said was good for ten miles an hour, we found the road to the Drenan farm quite hard to travel. The black land of old Fannin, which is said to be worth \$1 a foot, and which sells rapidly for \$100 an acre, when it is sold at all, presents serious obstacles to rapid locomotion in damp weather. After winding around through the creek bottom, however, and through lanes, the turnings of which were entirely too numerous, we were rewarded, after about two hours' travel, by a glimpse of what a colored gentleman whom we had subsidized informed us was the Drenan farm.

It is a typical North Texas farm, consisting of 600 acres in the highest state of cultivation, every acre of which is good for a bale and a half cotton, thirty bushels of wheat, seventy bushels of oats, forty or fifty bushels of corn, and other things in proportion, there being nothing adapted to this soil and climate that is not produced on this model farm.

#### AT THE DRENAN HOUSE.

A substantial double frame house, with a gallery extending the entire length of the south side, was the Mecca in front of which we finally drew rein. A full-blooded Irish setter, an English pointer and half a dozen greyhounds greeted our approach, mingled with cries of "Come back" from an old gentleman, and an invitation to "Light and come in."

We were greeted with "gentleman of 73" ~~gentleman~~ who kindly invited us to enter with the genuine old-time Texan hospitality, and in the same breath asked how he could serve us. A statement of our desire to see Mrs. Drenan elicited from the old gentleman a cry of "Old woman," which was answered almost immediately by the appearance of a tall, well-preserved lady of dignified and prepossessing appearance, to whom our host presented us in due form, and who proved to be the lady we were in search of, and who once declined the honor of an alliance with Abraham Lincoln.

In answer to our questions Mrs. Drenan informed us that she was a native of Runcombe County, N. C., where she was born in May, 1816, and from whence her parents moved to Sangamon County, Ill., in 1830. Shortly after their settlement in Sangamon County she met young Mr. Lincoln at one of the social gatherings which were rather infrequent at that early day, and the acquaintance thus casually made was continued until 1832, some time in the autumn of which year Mr. Lincoln made the young lady, Miss Martha Wilson, a formal offer of marriage.

A previous attachment, however, led Miss Wilson to decline the offer of Mr. Lincoln, for whom, she protests, she had a sincere, though Platonic, regard. She gave us many reminiscences of the early life of the rail-splitter President and his associates, which would make interesting reading matter for the present generation, from which the following incident is offered as showing the straightforward, homely character of Mr. Lincoln:

#### A STORY OF LINCOLN.

Mrs. Drenan said that at one time, before Mr. Lincoln had proposed to her, she attended church one Sunday at a place which was several miles from her home, and was accompanied by three other young ladies of her neighborhood, all of them riding to the place of worship on horseback. The party of girls were escorted by a couple of youths of tender age, and among the congregation assembled was the mother of Mr. Lincoln, who also came on horseback by herself, her son "Abe" being absent at the county seat, attending to some legal business. Before the conclusion of the services a thunderstorm came up, and when the congregation was dismissed the rain was descending in torrents. The young ladies were standing in the school house in which the services had been held, debating whether they should start out in the rain or wait till it was

over, when Mr. Lincoln was seen driving along the road in a covered or "top" buggy, the road passing in front of the school house. Naturally the young ladies began to speculate as to which one of them would be invited to a seat in his buggy, finally agreeing that he would certainly ask Miss Wilson, as it was current neighborhood gossip then that he was "sweet on" her. Mr. Lincoln stopped in front of the house, came in, and after shaking hands with the preacher and speaking to numerous friends, walked over to one corner of the building, where his mother sat conversing with some other ladies, and said: "Come on, Ma, I'll take you home."

In 1833 Miss Wilson was married to Mr. David Drenan, in Sangamon County, Ill., Mr. Drenan being a native of Caldwell County, Ky., where he was born in 1816, being about three months the senior of his wife, with whom he has lived happily for fifty-five years. They moved to Texas in 1842 and settled on the place where they now reside and where they have lived ever since. Some of the leading and wealthiest people of Honey Grove claim descent from this venerable couple, several sons, daughters and granddaughters being among our most estimable people.

#### A TEXAS PIONEER.

Mr. Drenan, too, gave us many reminiscences of his early life, both in Illinois and Texas. In speaking of Mr. Lincoln he said he heard him make the first political speech he ever made, when he was a candidate for the Legislature. Mr. Drenan says he was always a warm friend of Mr. Lincoln's, and afterward became an ardent admirer of him. Just prior to the removal of the Drenan family to Texas Mr. Lincoln visited them at their home, and tried to dissuade them from their contemplated move to the then wilderness of Texas, and spent three days with them at their Illinois home. Mr. Drenan has always been a staunch Republican, and he says he sees no reason to change his politics at this late hour. He says the first vote he ever cast was for William Henry Harrison, the grandfather of the present Republican candidate for President. He helped to build the first and original log cabin that was used in the campaign when old Tippecanoe made the race, and took an active, though perhaps not very prominent part in that campaign.

After his arrival in Texas, Mr. Drenan took a hand at what was at that time the principal diversion of the country—fighting Indians—and one could listen indefinitely to his thrilling adventures, which are related with that modesty which is characteristic of all brave men.

Although opposed to secession Mr. Drenan entered the Confederate army, in which, however, he never saw any active service. He was a slaveholder, too, but says he was and is heartily glad that the "peculiar institution" was overthrown.

Mr. and Mrs. Drenan are both hale and hearty, and their general appearance and bearing give evidence of a life well spent. They are held in high esteem by all their neighbors and, in fact, by all who know

them. Though possessed of plenty of this world's goods they both work yet. Mr. Drenan says he can do as much plowing in a day as any of his neighbors, and is considerable of a sportsman. Mrs. Drenan prepared a dinner for us that would have tempted the appetite of any one, and she does the most of her household work. She says she has always led an active life and she can not bear to be an idler in her declining years.

ST. LOUIS GLOBE DEMOCRAT

JULY 13, 1888



# ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LOST LOVE

Story of the Woman Who Was His First Sweetheart—Refused the Awkward Rail-Splitter.

Mrs. Susan Boyce, of Calistoga, California, Tells of the Courtship of 1836.

She Would Not Marry a Man She Did Not Love and She Thought Abe Awkward.

From the San Francisco Call.

Calistoga, Cal., May 22.—An interesting story of Abraham Lincoln's first and most ardent courtship has just come to light in this little mountain town of Calistoga, where the martyred president's early love dwells, a sweet old lady of 84.

Mrs. Susan Boyce is the name of the charming octogenarian, who, as Miss Susan Reid, of New Salem, on the Sangamon river, in Illinois, refused to marry the immortal war president in 1836. She dwells in a humble little cottage with her widowed sister who is but a few years her junior. Her husband has been dead for many years, and her principal income is a pension which she draws by reason of injuries her husband received in the famous Black Hawk war while fighting side by side with Lincoln, whose friend he was.

Mrs. Boyce is an unusually bright woman, whose mental and physical powers are well preserved, and there is character in every expression, in all she says and does, even to the slightest nod or gesture. She is about such a woman as one familiar with Lincoln's early life might suppose he could have loved, for she still has a rugged beauty in spite of the snows of age, and it requires little effort to imagine that she was a remarkably handsome girl in 1836—not a doll-faced creature, but a woman of marked character. She is tall and stately in appearance, and her eyes are a grayish blue.

Mrs. Boyce's estimate of the man who offered her his heart and hand sixty-one years ago is a little disappointing to hero-worshippers, for she does not consider that he was so great as he was honest, and says: "He is not to be mentioned in the same class with Washington and Jefferson. I think Jefferson was the greatest of them all, because he wrote the Declaration of Independence."

Sitting on the front porch of her humble home to-day, Lincoln's first sweetheart was a beautiful picture of serene old age. Her speech flows gently and without a tremor as she recalls events of her girlhood thoughtfully, yet without hesitation.

Clad in a plain black dress, with a becoming white cap, she folded her arms and gazed toward the mountains that rise gently a few hundred feet beyond the front yard, and said:

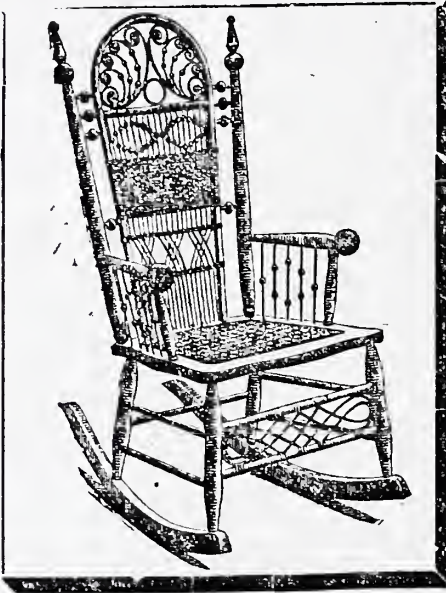
"I can truthfully say that I have never been sorry that I married Mr. Boyce rather than Abraham Lincoln. You ask why, perhaps? Well, I'll tell you why. I have always been a believer in love, in romance, in idealism. I have been a novel reader and a lover of poetry. I believe, too, in fate. It was not fated for me to marry Lincoln. He was an honest young man, but I did not love him. Why? I don't know, but I do know this, love is a thing that you can't force. In the first place he was homely, very awkward and very superstitious. He was a spiritualist and believed in dreams. He often told me his dreams were prophetic. I did not like this very well. He was only a com-

mon rail-splitter when I knew him, but he studied hard in his little cabin, and he was very entertaining. I never saw him after 1837, and I never heard him make a speech.

"He used to talk of the stars a great deal, and he seemed to me a very queer fellow. I was only a girl when I knew him, for I was born in 1815 in Kentucky, and I first met Mr. Lincoln in 1836 at the home of a neighbor named Able. We were both guests at the house for the day. There were many young folks there, and I remember that Lincoln was very bashful. My father was at that time one of Lincoln's best friends. His name was Lewis C. Reid, and he took Lincoln to Springfield

and introduced him to William E. Seward, from whom he borrowed the first law books he ever read. He and my father were of the same political faith, and they often talked politics by the hour.

"But the smooth-faced and awkward young man whose memory the Nation has long revered soon began to pay me more attention than he did my father, and this pleased my father more than it did me. In those days there were no buggies to speak of, and the way young folks courted very often was to go out on a horseback ride together. Mr. Lincoln often took me out horseback riding, and though he was not as ardent a wooer as I've seen since, he kept his case going pretty lively and pressed me very hard for an answer. He pretended that he never loved a girl before, and would never love anybody as



long as he loved me, and I think he meant what he said; but I did not want to marry him, much as I liked his common-sense, his absence of 'airs' and his great honesty, so I invented a story.

"I told him I was engaged to a young man in Kentucky, but he did not give up for this, though it cooled his ardor a little for a time. Finally he told my father he would call one day for his final answer, but I made it a point to be away from home, and he never got over it. My father lectured me severely for my conduct. He wanted me to marry Lincoln, and he afterwards told me what a little dunce I'd made of myself, but my mother took my part, for she believed love was a thing, for each individual to settle in his or her own heart. I can say that I have never for one moment regretted that I did not marry Mr. Lincoln, for if I could not give a man my whole heart I'd never marry him for money or position."

Mrs. Boyce tells of an interesting incident that occurred at a party one night, where a dozen young folks were trying to tell their fortunes with the aid of a common doorkey and a Bible.

"Mr. Lincoln was always interested in such things," she said, "and he at once wanted to know all about the game, so somebody explained it. It was this: The key was placed on a verse of the open Bible, and when questions were asked the key was supposed to turn by supernatural power. I remember Lincoln asked, 'Will Susie marry a man whose name begins with L?' and the key did not move. Then he asked, 'Will she marry a man whose name begins with B?' and the key whirled. I have often thought that a strange thing. I was then going with a young man named Brooks, and did not then dream of Mr. Boyce, who became my husband."

A strange illustration of the Emersonian saying that the gods come in low guises—Odin in a hut, Jesus in a manger—is seen in Mrs. Boyce's estimate of the great man whose love she had half a century ago. Speaking of his mental qualities, she said: "He was too changeable and easily influenced by other men, and he lacked stability."

"He did not have the education I ought to have had to be president, but I believe he was as honest as any man who ever lived. I knew Miss Todd, whom Lincoln married, and I have heard of good authority that his marriage was largely influenced by outside advice. That is one of the reasons I say what I do about his lack of stability. Anyhow, as a young man, he struck me as being moved by his dreams and by outside advice."

Mrs. Boyce says Lincoln's ardent courtship forced her to marry sooner than she would otherwise have done, for when her father scolded her for not accepting Abraham's offer, she married to escape unpleasant lectures at home. "Mr. Boyce might have been very rich if he had not got to gambling," she said, "but we went to Texas in 1849 and came to California in 1852, and there were plenty of temptations for gamblers. I knew Sam Houston

well. He was not a bit like Lincoln. Houston loved to dance, while Lincoln never danced. That I can remember, but he often took me to singing school and church."

Mrs. Boyce says she has often felt proud in a way that she knew so good a man as Lincoln and had his love and esteem, but she says such a thing as worrying over what "might have been" has never crossed her mind for a moment, as she is a fatalist pure and simple.

"I believe that whatever way I'm to die I will die," she said, "and I believe marriage and all the events of life are ruled largely in the same way. Regrets are useless and day dreams are a waste of time, but I do believe in romance and love. If love is not a fact, then I have lived and reared my family in vain. After more than three score years I can say that

Lincoln was one of the best friends I ever had and one of the squarest men I ever knew. If he were alive to-day I'd be getting a bigger pension from the government by reason of what my father and husband did for their country in the Black Hawk war."

The remarkable old woman who enjoys the distinction of having jilted Abraham Lincoln has blue eyes and silvery hair, thought it was once raven black. She is 5 feet 7 inches tall, and is still active on her feet. The only defection from perfect health is an eczema that troubles her face and head, for which reason she always muffles her head and neck.



There was, of course, a rough gallantry among the young people; and Lincoln's old comrades and friends in Indiana have left many tales of how he "went to see the girls;" of how he brought in the biggest back-log and made the brightest fire; then, of how, "sitting around" it, watching the way the sparks flew, the young folks told their fortunes. He helped pare apples, shell corn and crack nuts. He took the girls to meetin' and to spellin'-school, although he was not often allowed to take part in the spelling match, for the one who "choose first" always chose "Abe Lincoln," and that was equivalent to winning, as the others knew "he would stand up the longest."

The nearest approach to sentiment at this time, of which we know, is a story he once told to an acquaintance in Springfield. It was a rainy day, and he was sitting with his feet on the wood-sill, his eyes on the street, watching the rain. Suddenly he looked up and said:

"Did you ever write out a story in your mind? I did when I was a little codger. One day a wagon with a lady and two girls and a man broke down near us, and while they were fixing up, they cooked in our kitchen. The woman had books and read us stories, and they were the first I ever had heard. I took a great fancy to one of the girls; and when they were gone I thought of her a great deal, and one day when I was sitting out in the sun by the house I wrote out a story in my mind. I thought I took my father's horse and followed the wagon, and finally I found it, and they were surprised to see me. I talked with the girl and persuaded her to elope with me; and that night I put her on my horse and we started off across the prairie. After several hours we came to a camp; and when we rode up we found it was the one we had left a few hours before, and we went in. The next night we tried again, and the same thing happened—the horse came back to the same place; and then we concluded that we ought not to elope. I stayed until I had persuaded her father to give her to me. I always meant to write that story out and publish it, and I began once; but I concluded it was not much of a story. But I think that was the beginning of love with me."

—Ida M. Tarbell, in McClure's Magazine.





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SEVENTH YEAR. DES MOINES, IOWA, FEBRUARY, 1904. NUMBER TWO.

Some Stories  
of the  
Strange, Weird Man  
Who Gained a  
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Born Feb. 12, 1809.

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# Abraham Lincoln THE MAN

Peculiar Courtships

His Odd Personality

and

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tens followed, but they grew fewer and less affectionate and finally ceased.

In the meantime Lincoln had come to love Anne as he never loved another woman, and as her attachment to McNamar weakened through his continued absence and silence Lincoln's suit progressed. In time she was induced to promise that she would marry Lincoln if McNamar should formally release her. She wrote to McNamar, but her letter was never answered, and at last she accepted Lincoln unconditionally. But the strain to which she had been subjected had been too great for her to bear, and she gave way under it. She was seized with brain fever and sank day by day until all hope was abandoned. During the last days of her illness her doctors

forbade her receiving any visitors, but she asked for Lincoln so continuously that a few days before her death he was admitted to her bedside.

When Lincoln heard that Anne was dead he roamed the woods in woful abstraction, almost madness. His condition became so serious that he was sent to the home of Bowlin Green, who lived in a secluded spot in the hills some distance from the village. There he was won back to something like his normal self. But the wound he had received in the death of Miss Rutledge seems never to have healed. Long afterward, in speaking of her resting place, he said to a friend, "My heart lies buried there," and he told fellow members of the Illinois legisla-

ture that he dared not carry a pocket-knife lest he be tempted to take his life.

In time another Kentucky girl, Mary Owens, came into Lincoln's life. She differed from Miss Rutledge in that she had been highly educated and had been reared in wealth. Her social position seems to have been the rock on which Lincoln's second love was wrecked. She had met Lincoln when visiting her brother-in-law, Bennett Abbe, in New Salem before Miss Rutledge died. She came again to New Salem about a year after Lincoln's great loss, when he was peculiarly susceptible to feminine sympathy. Their intimacy ripened until it culminated in an offer of marriage. Miss Owens declined his proposal with all kindness,



## KNEW LINCOLN IN YOUTH

Aged Lady Now Living in California Recalls  
Times of Long Ago

1905

Twenty miles out from Los Angeles, Cal., on the seashore road, in a humble, four-roomed house, is an old woman who Abraham Lincoln was very fond of and who he teasingly named "Quinine" 70 years ago, when, a store clerk in New Salem, he boarded for \$1 a week under her father's roof.

Mrs. Vienna Lyster has just celebrated her 89th birthday. A stately old woman, she is still free of step and straight of vision, though her memory has begun to falter, recollection to waver and down the long vista of years and day-marks of her girlhood are blurred.

This long-ago friend of Lincoln sits in her son's home at Burnett and tells many stories of the Great Commoner. With a quaint tenderness comes the thought that this is the cousin, the girlhood friend, of fair Ann Rutledge, the dead love of Lincoln's youth.

For twenty years, "alike to fortune and to fame unknown," the recipient of Lincoln's whimsical nickname has made her home in the whitewashed cottage in the little town of Burnett.

Seventy-five years ago, in the summer of 1830, Lincoln released himself from parental care and started out to make his own way. This was soon after his people has removed to Illinois, and the future President was then a gaunt, tall lad of little more than 21. The following year, just after his famous flatboat trip to New Orleans, he made his second and "permanent" appearance in New Salem, on the banks of the Sangamon river. Its population at that time probably did not exceed seventy-five men, women and children. It was one of the many "boom" towns of what was then the Far Western State of Illinois.

The ensuing five years, 1831 to 1836, cover one of the most interesting periods of Lincoln's early life, when he learned the lessons of love and death and to rise above the bitterness of despair. It was during this period that Mrs. Lyster (then Vienna Cameron) knew him, received at his hands the odd nickname of "Quinine," and became a quiet observer of his courtship of her beautiful cousin Ann Rutledge.

One of the foremost men of the New Salem neighborhood was the Rev. John Cameron, Mrs. Lloyd's father. He preached in the Presbyterian church on Sundays, and, after the custom of those sturdy times, turned a shrewd eye to business during the week. He it was, indeed who, with his wife's brother, the James Rutledge mentioned by historians in connection with the lustrum of Lincoln's life, laid out the town site of New Salem.

At the time of Lincoln's advent in New Salem "Parson" Cameron with his wife and family—eleven daughters and one son—had his home in the proverbial log house of the period, a few miles from town on the banks of the Sangamon stream, close to the Rutledge & Cameron mill. This latter combined the business of sawing lumber and grinding grist. The mill, on a dam that jutted out a few hundred feet into the river, was one of the last landmarks of the locality to crumble away. Lincoln for a short time was in charge of it.

Mrs. Lyster does not recall the day that Lincoln first came to her father's home to board, but reference to what meager data is extant indicates that it was in the winter or spring of 1833. "Lincoln was a great, big, hulking fellow then," says Mrs. Lyster, "full to the chin with fun and always playing droll pranks on us girls. He was a clerk in Denton Offutt's store when he came to us, and my mother charged him about \$1 a week for his bed and board."

The "us girls" referred to by Mrs. Lyster were eleven in number (reinforced by one brother), and a right merry crowd for a log cabin home, it may be guessed. In the order of their ages they were: Betsy Cameron, nicknamed "Isabelle" by Lincoln; Vienna, whom the future President preferred to address as "Quinine," perhaps because at 17 she could find a sharp thrust to answer his teasing with; Thomas lone brother in a wilderness of girls, called "Tam O'Shanter" by Lincoln, and Nancy, Jane, Martha, Sarah, Salina and Sorena (the twins), Eliza, Caroline and Margaret.

What clerk to-day would walk five miles daily between his store and his boarding house? Lincoln did it for months, striding from "Parson" Cameron's log cabin in the early mornings to Denton Offutt's general store, and back again at dusk.

He loved exercise in the open, he was proud—may be at time a trifle boastful—of his physical strength and great powers of endurance, but aside from that, one cannot help wondering if John Cameron's merry houseful of buxom daughters may not have been a keener inspiration for those daily trudges than love of Nature and of Nature's moods.

Mrs. Lyster remembers "Abe" striding steadily, but unhurriedly "home," gaunt shoulders drooped, shaggy head bent and eyes glued to the pages of a grammar that he held well up as he walked.

Awaiting him at the long tramp's end were the friends who, in accepting the \$1-a-week board, had taken him in and made him one of themselves. "Lincoln, or 'Abe,' as we one and all soon came to call him was a member of the family as long as he stayed with us," Mrs. Lyster says. "To him my mother was 'Aunt Polly,' a fact borne out by historians.

"Lincoln," says Mrs. Lyster, recalling those rare days, "was a remarkable young man for pranks. He had a nickname for each one of us girls, but I can only remember a few. One of his tricks was to pluck his friends by their ears—he was always doing that. I have heard my father speak of seeing 'Abe' standing at a corner, or in the road, telling one of his droll stories or engaged in earnest discussion, and, at a climax in the tale or conversation, stretching out one of his long arms, and gently pulling the listener's ear, instead of plucking the lapel of his coat. From more than one of us Cameron girls 'Abe' caught a scolding for not leaving our ears alone."



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## Abraham Lincoln THE MAN

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Died April 15, 1865.

His Odd Personality  
and  
Peculiar Courtships

NINETY-FIVE years ago the twelfth day of the present month there was born in a little log cabin down in Kentucky a baby boy to whom in later life was to be entrusted the destinies of the greatest nation on earth, at a time when her right to have a place among the nations of the earth was being tested in a manner, which even now, more than forty years have passed since the first

those who can remember it, when the nation's life was in danger, to shudder, and wonder how it was ever possible for flesh and blood to endure that awful strain. The boys and girls who read *The Homemaker* today have no conception of what those years from '61 to '65 meant to the fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers of that dreadful time. God was kind to us, as a nation, however, in permitting us to have as president then a man whose absolute devotion to his country was one of his most striking characteristics. A man who gave first of his brain, then of his heart, and lastly his life itself, "that a nation of the people, for the people, and by the people might not perish from the earth."

This sketch of Lincoln has to do with him not as the great martyr president, or the great emancipator, but as the man, for above all things else Lincoln was intensely human.

With all his greatness, he was a man of like passions with ourselves, and in nothing was this humanizing touch of nature better shown than in his loves.

Aside from the boy and girl romances of his school days, Lincoln's disfigurement had kept him from much association with the opposite sex, and it was not until he had reached the full stature of manhood that he was strongly drawn toward any woman not of his own family. Then he met Anne Rutledge. She was a beautiful girl of Kentucky birth, with auburn hair, blue eyes, a fair complexion and of slight physique. Her father was one of the founders of New Salem, Ill., and was the proprietor of the village tavern when Lincoln went to that place in 1833. Lincoln boarded at the tavern. Miss Rutledge, who was then about seventeen, was betrothed to a young man from the east, John McNeil, who had become one of New Salem's leading citizens.

Her lover, having accumulated what was then a fortune, determined to pay a visit to his old home in New York state, and before going away, pledged Anne to await his return, at the same time making the singular revelation that his name was not McNeil, but McNamur. When he reached New York, he wrote to her that his old father's declining health would require his presence with him, to nurse him. Then he

ters followed, but they grew fewer and less affectionate and finally ceased.

In the meantime Lincoln had come to love Anne as he never loved another woman, and as her attachment to McNamur weakened through his continued absence and silence Lincoln's suit progressed. In time she was induced to promise that she would marry Lincoln if McNamur should formally release her. She wrote to McNamur, but her letter was never answered, and at last she accepted Lincoln unconditionally. But the strain to which she had been subjected had been too great for her to bear, and she gave way under it. She was seized with brain fever and sank day by day until all hope was abandoned. During the last days of her illness her doctors

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Long afterward, in speaking of her resting place, he said to a friend, "My heart lies buried there," and he told fellow members of the Illinois legisla-

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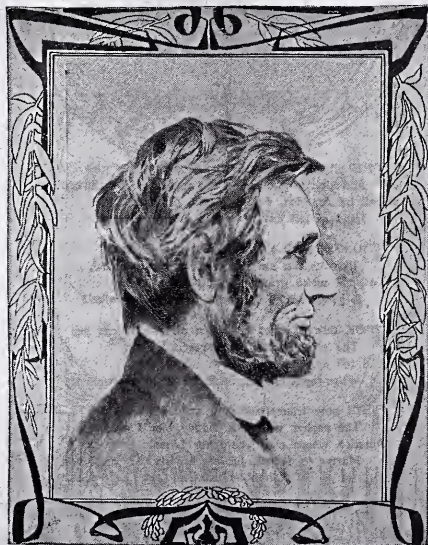
In time another Kentucky girl, Mary Owens, came into Lincoln's life. She differed from Miss Rutledge in that she had been highly educated and had been reared in wealth. Her social position seems to have been the rock on which Lincoln's second love was wrecked. She had met Lincoln when visiting her brother in law, August Alder, in New Salem, before Miss Rutledge died. She came again to New Salem about a year after Lincoln's great loss, when he was peculiarly susceptible to feminine sympathy. Their intimacy ripened until it culminated in an offer of marriage. Miss Owens declined his proposal with all kindness. Lincoln renewed his offer later, but it was again refused.

The year 1840 found Mr. Lincoln in his thirty-second year and still unmarried. "I have come to the conclusion," he said in a letter to a friend shortly before this time, "never again to think of marrying." But meanwhile he had seen more of the world. The state capital had been removed to Springfield, and Lincoln soon observed the power of social and family connections. Though still poor and lacking the graces and ease of bearing obtained through mingling in polite society, he had risen to a high place in the law and in politics and numbered among his friends many men of wealth and consequence.

Mary Todd, like Lincoln's two earlier sweethearts, a Kentuckian, went to Springfield in 1839 to live with her sister, Mrs. Nathan W. Edwards. She was of a rich family and one in whose veins coursed the bluest blood of the south. She was then in her twenty-first year, of strong, passionate nature, and had left her home in Kentucky because "she could not live under the same roof with a stepmother." She was of average height, rather compactly built, with well rounded face, rich dark brown hair and bluish gray eyes. In her bearing she was proud, but handsome and vivacious. She was exceptionally well educated and a brilliant conversationalist.

Lincoln was led through the influence of Joshua Speed, a firm friend of the Edwardses, to call on Mrs. Todd, and he was from the first her captivated. The contrast in their characters made Lincoln's courtship of Miss Todd a strange one. "I have often happened in a room where they were sitting," relates Mrs. Edwards, "and Mary was leading the conversation. Mr. Lincoln scarcely said a word. He gazed upon her so irresistibly drawn toward her by some superior and unseen power. Mrs. Edwards believed that while Lincoln was deeply attached to Mary they could not always be congenial and advised against the marriage.

Mrs. Edwards' advice fell on stony



ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
Born Feb. 12, 1809; Died April 15, 1865.



ground. The courtship ran on to the point of an engagement, when a new and disturbing element loomed in the path. This was no other than the dashing and handsome Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's rival now in love as in after



LINCOLN AT FORTY YEARS OF AGE.

years he became his rival in public life. Douglas was vastly more attractive to women than Lincoln, and it is not to be marvelled at that he should supplant Lincoln in the affections of the proud and aristocratic Miss Todd. There were those who thought Miss Todd's encouragement of Douglas an artifice to spur Lincoln on to manifest his love with greater fervor, but a lady relative of Mrs. Lincoln, who lived with her after her marriage, is authority for the statement that Mary loved Douglas and but for her promise to Lincoln would have married him.

Douglas was unremitting in his attentions to Miss Todd and seemed to go out of his way to annoy Lincoln with his rivalry. Finally the unfortunate position she was compelled to occupy between the two young men resulted in making Miss Todd ill. Her brother-in-law and physician, William Wallace, to whom she had confided the real cause of her sickness, went to Douglas and asked him to end his pursuit. This Douglas did with great reluctance.

If Miss Todd intended by a flirtation with Douglas to test Lincoln's devotion she committed a great mistake. Lincoln began to feel the sting. One evening he called on Joshua Speed, to whom he was indebted for his introduction to Miss Todd, and showed him a letter addressed to Mary telling her that he had deliberated on the matter of their engagement and that he did not feel that he now loved her enough to marry her. He asked Speed to deliver this letter. Speed refused and advised Lincoln to go to Mary in person and settle the subject once for all. Speed waited until nearly midnight for Lincoln to come back. When he came and Speed asked him if he had followed his instructions he said: "Yes, and when I told Mary I did not love her



HOUSE WHERE LINCOLN WAS MARRIED. she burst into tears and wrung her hands as if in agony, talking incoherently. I found the tears couring down my own cheeks. I took her in my arms and kissed her." Convinced that Miss Todd considered

the engagement ratified instead of broken, as Lincoln at first intended, he continued his visits, and things went on smoothly as before. Douglas had dropped out of the race, and everything pointed to an early marriage. The time fixed for the wedding was the first day of January, 1841. Careful

preparations for the occasion were made in the Edwards mansion. The house was decorated, the supper prepared and the guests invited. The latter assembled on the evening set. Miss Todd, in bridal array, sat in an adjoining room. Nothing was lacking but the groom. He had been unaccountably delayed. An

hour passed, and the bride as well as the guests grew restless. Another hour passed. Messengers were sent out through the town, and, each returning unaccompanied, it became evident that Mr. Lincoln's absence was premeditated.



MRS. LINCOLN DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

The party broke up, and Miss Todd retired to her own room. Toward day-break, after persistent search, Lincoln was found. Restless, gloomy, desperate, he seemed an object of pity. His friends, fearing a tragic termination of the strange episode, watched him closely. Every instrument which could be used for suicide was kept from him. Mrs. Edwards and Miss Todd did not hesitate to regard him as insane.

After two or three weeks of an agony in which Lincoln was persistent but accompanied Speed to his home. The change of environment away from the cloud which had darkened Lincoln's mind, and he returned to Springfield nearly cured. He resumed his practice of law and let the memory of his engagement to Miss Todd trouble him no more. Their ways had diverged. But through Mrs. Simon Frazer, a friend of Miss Todd, they were brought together again. After a brief second courtship Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married on Nov. 4, 1842, at the home of Mr. Edwards. Herndon asserts his belief that Lincoln married Miss Todd merely to save his honor. He came to his wedding, says Herndon, "pale and trembling, as a lamb to the slaughter." When Lincoln was dressing in the home of his friend, Mr. Butler, preparing to



"THERE IS ONE OTHER."

meet his bride, Butler's little son asked him where he was going. "To home—I, I suppose," was Lincoln's answer. Between 1830 and 1880 the population of Illinois increased twenty when Lincoln came.

## THE BIRTHNIGHT OF LINCOLN

BY WALTON WILLIAMS

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OUT of Kentucky night came there a breeze  
Fraught with the pine-land odors, and with news  
Such as might rock the thrones beyond the seas,  
Could monarch-ridden lands its text peruse.

THE laden breeze did beckon in the morn  
The Spirits of the Right by men unseen,  
And whispered as it sped, "A babe is born  
Whose glory it will be to crown a queen."

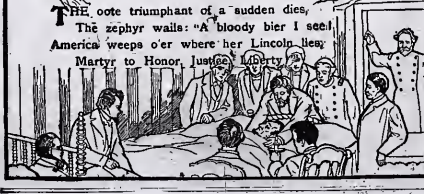
THE souls of Freedom and of Honor bright  
And Justice fair did shudder thus to hear.  
What could they gain for the good cause of Right  
While scenery the world of fair?

THE plying breeze, now laughed aloud in glee  
And spoke: "The queen this newborn babe will crown  
Shall be America, entirely free,  
Land of full justice and of bright renown!"

CONFIRMING, and enlarging the decrees  
By which a narrow freedom was installed,  
He shall make grander than the dynasties  
A people's rule, and save a world enthralled!

FOR thrones must fall when all the nations see  
The glory of his doubly-rescued land,  
And toil must triumph to its fair degree  
When regal bayonets back oot greed's command!

THE oote triumphant of a sudden dies,  
The zephyr wails: "A bloody bier I see!  
America weeps o'er where her Lincoln lies,  
Martyr to Honor, Justice, Liberty!"



Elizabeth Brownly Yoakum

#### SHE REFUSED LINCOLN.

Mrsr. Isaac Yoakum, who died at Monroe, Iowa, at the age of 81 years, might have been Mrs. Abraham Lincoln had she so desired. She had the chance once, for Abraham Lincoln proposed that she marry him.

"I preferred Isaac Yoakum, that's why," Mrs. Yoakum used to say when inquisitors asked her why she refused the heart and hand of the future great man.

"That's where I got ahead of Abe," was the favorite comment of Mr. Yoakum whenever he repeated the story. Of course both Mrs. Yoakum, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Brownly, and Mr. Lincoln were rather young when they went to husking bees and spelling schools and those other diversions that one reads about. But Abe's affection for her was none the less sincere. Only it wasn't returned in the same degree.—Des Moines Register and Leader.

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81

1826



1809—The Lincoln

# Courtships

Death of Ann Rutledge.  
The Mary Owens Affair.  
Lincoln and Douglas as  
Rivals In Love

**M**OST men have several affairs of the heart, and little or nothing is said about them. With Lincoln it is different. His courtships are magnified, torn to pieces, paraded before the world, his tenderest emotions being dissected and laid bare in a manner the most callous. His despair over the death of one sweetheart, his letters to another, his misunderstandings with a third, who finally became Mrs. Lincoln—all are set forth to the last detail. They are only such experiences as occur to most men, with variations, of course, to fit each individual case. With others they are considered sacred, however, and if mentioned at all it is with a delicacy which one would wish shown to his own love affairs. It seems to be the price of greatness that nothing is sacred. If the future immortal whispers tender nothings in a corner they are afterward bawled from the honsetops. If he so much as casts a melting glance at some fair one it is photographed for the inspection of future ages.

There are three affairs in the life of the martyr president, and a fourth is hinted at by at least one biographer. The average man can remember an equal number and perhaps several more. The beauty with Lincoln is that all his heart attacks came before marriage, which is not invariably the case in these days of affinities and divorce courts.

There must be no mistake made in one regard. Abraham Lincoln was a society man. In Springfield his name was on most of the committees that got up functions, and he was a welcome guest at all houses. The same was true in Washington the two years he served in congress. While he was not exactly a ladies' man for the reason that he was forever telling stories and so got all the men around him, he was not insensible to feminine charms and was as ready to fall in love as any young man with strong passions and an eye for beauty.

This seems so much a matter of course that it is strange Mr. Lincoln's biographers should dwell on it at such length. It is on a par with referring so constantly to his height, to his homeliness and to the fact that he told broad stories. It is as though we should say that Abraham Lincoln is chiefly noted for his ugliness, his love affairs, his risque anecdotes and his great length and not that he is celebrated for liberating a race, for saving a nation, for being merciful, demo-

Centenary—1909

# of Lincoln

By James A. Edgerton

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cratic, truth loving and white of soul. In other words, we put forward his nonessentials at the expense of his essentials. We emphasize those things in which he was not distinguished from his kind to the exclusion of those things in which he was so distinguished. Other men have had love affairs not essentially different from those of Lincoln; others have been as ugly or as tall, and others have told as many stories, but nobody else ever issued an emancipation proclamation; no one else ever held together the world's greatest republic in the hour of her supreme trial; no one else, with one exception, ever combined such meekness and greatness, and few others have been more tender hearted,

benevolent, honest and truthful. He was the very incarnation of the thing we call Americanism, of the democratic spirit. He was the glorified type of the common man, the voice and leader of the plain people. It is these things that have made him "the gentlest memory of our world." Presumably he had ten fingers, two ears and the usual number of bones found in the human body. But why obtrude these facts? Tom Smith and Jim Jenkins are equally endowed in this regard. There are a billion and a half of human entities now living, nearly all with ten fingers, two ears and the full complement of bones. Most of them likewise have had love affairs or will have them when they arrive at the susceptible age; most of them old enough to talk at all have told stories or have tried to do so; most of them are plain of face, especially if they are of the male gender, and all of them have linear dimensions of some sort or other. Yet there is not a single Abraham Lincoln in the whole billion and a half. Why spend so much time on describing a man's hair and eyebrows when he has a soul, or, rather, is a soul, so supremely worth study?

Not that I would minimize Mr. Lincoln's love affairs. These things in the

life of any man are beautiful and are cherished according to the degree of his development. With a man of Lincoln's tender heart and sensibilities such things would be sacred and holy, not to be profaned by light references or prying eyes. A man's public life belongs to the public. His private and domestic affairs are his own. The mere fact that one is prominent does not make him the legitimate prey of the merely curious. Many great men have had unhappy home lives. Poor Lincoln was none too fortunate in this regard. But he is at least entitled to respect, even though he was denied his full measure of happiness. Such respect would shield him from a prying scrutiny after death that would never have been given his affairs during life. With all due respect to Messrs. Lamon and Herndon, who, having been his law partners, should have been his devoted friends, it must be said that they have dragged his purely private affairs to light in a very tactless if not an indelicate manner. Moreover, many of their conclusions reflecting on his parents and some regarding his wife have been shown by thorough investigation to be untrue. For example, Herndon says that Lincoln absented himself on his wedding night. As careful a biographer as Ida M. Tarbell denies this and gives the word of numerous personal friends of both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln to prove her statement. In the same manner several of Herndon's allegations concerning Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln have been proved untrue by the actual records brought to light.

The simple facts are that Lincoln's parents, his early life, his education, his courtships and his domestic life were about such as fall to the lot of the average man born, reared and living his adult life in a similar environment. His stories were about such as were told by other frontiersmen, lawyers and politicians in his day, except





## He was not insensible to feminine charms.

that Lincoln's were better and more to the point. He might have been a little taller and more homely than most, but if so what of it? There was nothing about all these circumstances to differentiate him from his kind or to explain him. They were the shell of the oyster, but gave no indications of the pearl inside.

Yet there are beautiful things and such as can be spoken of with all propriety and respect in the love affairs and the home life of Abraham Lincoln. His despair at the death of Ann Rutledge, his agony over the "snows beating on her grave," the fears of his friends for his sanity, which went to the length of their taking precautions against his possible suicide—all this presents a touching and pathetic picture.

As for the affair with Mary Owens, there is nothing in it worthy a passing notice except that it showed a fine sense of honor on the part of Lincoln and an unselfish thoughtfulness for the happiness of his future wife.

About the courtship with the woman he finally married and about his home life with her there has been more or less dispute. Herndon's exploded story that Lincoln ran away on his mar-

riage night has already been mentioned. With quite as much particularity Lamon states that at this time Mr. Lincoln was really in love with a Miss Edwards, who lived in the same house with his fiancée, and that this fact accounts for his dejection, which was then more pronounced than usual, and also for the long delay in his marriage to Miss Todd. So far as the writer is aware no other biographer mentions the alleged infatuation for Miss Edwards.

That Mr. Lincoln was to some extent unhappy in his married life is a fact disputed by none. The degree of this unhappiness has probably been exaggerated. Moreover, there have been so many slighting references to Mrs. Lincoln that I feel like taking up the cudgels in her behalf. That she had a temper is probably true. A temper is not necessarily a bad thing. Mr. Lincoln himself had a prodigious temper when it was aroused. So had Washington. So has every man or woman that amounts to anything.

But there is this much to be said for the wife of Abraham Lincoln. She loved him, as was shown by the fact that she married him despite his long

delay. While Herndon's story about the marriage night dereliction is probably untrue, there was some kindred happening at about that time. Another thing that can be said in Mrs. Lincoln's behalf is that she showed enough discrimination to prefer Abraham Lincoln to Stephen A. Douglas. Under the circumstances this required true insight into character. Douglas when he paid court to her was already a great man, which was not so apparent in Lincoln's case. Douglas was brilliant, polished and had a most winning manner, while Lincoln was more or less uncouth and shy in feminine society. Miss Todd was the daughter of a leading man of Kentucky, and thus Douglas belonged to her own social class in those outward things which make up class distinctions, while Lincoln did not. Nevertheless she chose Lincoln. She is entitled to honor for both her vision and her heart.

Miss Todd always said that she would marry a president of the United States. No ordinary woman would have had the courage to say that in the face of the ridicule it would occasion, and no one but a very extraordinary woman would have had the ability to pick the winner.

Is it not just possible that some of Lincoln's biographers have overdrawn his unhappiness at home just as they have unduly emphasized his poverty and have done positive injustice to his father? Is it not possible that there was some resentment due to the fact that Miss Todd belonged to an aristocratic family and did not share her husband's views on slavery? And is it not more than possible that there has been an undue prying into the private affairs of both Mr. Lincoln and his wife?

Lincoln's great love for his children, which caused him to err, if at all, on the side of too great indulgence, would not indicate a wholly unhappy home life. The fact that Mrs. Lincoln was loyal to her husband and his ambition, that she shared his great life, that she bore double sorrows in the death of her sons and his own assassination and that she endured so much abuse from biographers without murmur entitle her to our charity and respect. She was a woman, a wife and mother. She is dead. Common chivalry and common humanity would at least dictate that nothing should be said of her now except in loving tenderness; if not that, silence.

For one I am tired of much of the utterly trivial stuff written about Abraham Lincoln. He was a great enough man to be treated in a great manner. He had an innate dignity and fineness that call for respect from those who would show his true spirit to the world.

His domestic life was utterly white. The same high honor, the same thoughtfulness for the happiness of others, the same patience and forbearance, the same great love nature, are found in his courtships and his home that appear in all his other relations and deeds. He was so much greater than his early environment and associates that there is little gained by dwelling upon them.



# Women Lincoln Loved All Lived In Tri-State Area

## Five Had Tremendous Influence on Course of His Life

*Woman's Press 4-1928*

The love of five women was in Abraham Lincoln's life and they were all within that area which bound the early years of his life—northern Kentucky, southern Indiana and southern Illinois.

The first woman Lincoln loved was his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Altho pioneers were not given to demonstrating their affection, the depth of the boy's feeling was shown in his later words—"All that I am and hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

Less than two years after the Lincoln family arrived in Indiana, the mother became the victim of an epidemic known as "milk sickness" then prevalent in the community. That death and the crude preparation for burial must have left a deep scar in the heart of the nine-year-old boy. His appeal to David Elkins, a minister back in Kentucky, to hold a funeral service for the mother is a well-known tradition.

### Tragedy Stalks

That was the first real tragedy. The love young Abe held for his sister Sarah, as some writers see it, must have been traceable to the double role she was then to play as both mother and sister. This 11-year-old girl was then the mother of a household consisting of her father and brother and a waif by the name of Dennis Hanks whose foster parents had also been taken by the destructive milk sickness.

Before Sally was 20 she married Aaron Grigsby. Then in less than two years, she joined her mother in death. Lincoln was left prac-

tically alone in the world, being not yet out of his teens.

The third woman Lincoln loved was his stepmother, Sarah Johnston Lincoln. Her coming must have brought some solace to the youth because it made the little cabin into something like a home again. She had three children of her own, but that apparently did not keep her from giving plenty of motherly affection to the motherless boy, for he seems to have cared for her with a love that surpassed that of her own children.

### His Sweetheart

The fourth woman Lincoln loved was his sweetheart, Ann Rutledge. There has been much discussion among Lincoln biographers about the exact details of this love, but Ann's sister, Sarah Rutledge Sanders, has said: "Lincoln loved Ann sincerely, and she gave him undivided affection."

This love also paved the way for poignant tragedy, for Ann, too, died.

The last of the five women Lincoln loved was the woman who was to become his wife, and the mother of his children, Mary Todd.

## ABE LINCOLN'S FIRST LOVE

By Major G. W. Kimball, of Mt. Vernon, in Rockport Democrat.

*Manuscript - 3-1-34*

A story of Lincoln's youth at eighteen as related to the writer at the latter's home by John M. Lockwood about 1900, or prior to his death.

Mr. Lockwood said he was eighteen years of age and was apprenticed to the man who conducted an old fashioned carding machine where native wool was carded in "rolls," from which yarn was spun into woolen fabric for clothing of the homespun variety by the early settlers. In this instance, the subject of this related sketch by Mr. Lockwood happened at the village of Princeton, in Gibson county, Ind. The incident happened in 1827 and was published in The Century by Mr. Jesse Weik, of Greencastle, for whom the writer secured this sketch.

So far as I know the sketch has never been in print except locally. It may have been burned together with the library of the late Mr. John Haas, son-in-law of John M. Lockwood, and therefore lost. I am relating as authentic just as Mr. Lockwood related it to me, to-wit:

"There came a young man dressed in homespun pants, which were short for the wearer and crude in make-up, riding horseback with a sheet of wool behind him. He inquired of young Lockwood (apprentice) at the carding machine, if the wool could be carded and how soon it could be done. It was then well up in the day and the apprentice replied that it could be finished at 3 p.m. The young man was told that so much of the wool would be taken as "toll," expense for labor, there being no cash furnished by the patron. The sheet was laid down. The question was asked for the young man's name, which he gave as A. Lincoln, from Spencer county. Instructions were then completed. The young man remarked that he would spend part of the time in the village until he was ready to return to his distant home. As young Lincoln was returning to the carding machine he saw two young ladies just ahead of him. He came hurriedly to the apprentice and enquired who they were. The apprentice answered that one was Miss Evans, daughter of General Evans of Evansville. Young Lincoln remarked that he would like to get an introduction to her. The apprentice smiled in derision at the difference in social position in life. The incident passed. Lincoln was sad and disappointed that his chance of getting an introduction to the young lady was so small, so with his rolls carded, with the toll taken as expense, he remounted his nag, having fastened the sheet behind him. He was soon lost in the distance. All of this was an incident and of itself merely forgotten.

Many years passed. The Lincolns had moved to Illinois. The same Lincoln was a candidate for President of the United States. Lockwood had become a capitalist in Mt. Vernon, remembering the name, Lincoln, which he had written with a red keel on that sheet of wool at the carding machine many years before. He went to a place in Illinois to hear Lincoln speak. At the close of the address, Mr. Lockwood approached Mr. Lincoln. Lockwood, himself, had become prominent in social and business circles in his community and was in deep sympathy with Mr. Lincoln's candidacy for the presidency. It was a supreme moment for Lockwood to broach the long ago incident at the carding machine over at Princeton, Gibson county, Indiana, when the distinguished speaker, as a youth, became interested in a certain young lady already mentioned in these memory notes. Mr. Lincoln became animated and with a smiling emphasis, said, "Mr. Lockwood, that was the scene of my first love."

Mr. Lincoln grew in popularity as President-elect. Upon his inaugural route to Washington his train was met by many Indiana citizens. As the train crossed the state and halted for a brief time, probably at Lafayette, General Orr, of Princeton and Evansville, was present at the inaugural train. The new president spoke briefly to the crowd among whom was Orr, who announced his name and town (Princeton). At the name of Princeton, Lincoln's mind instantly flashed back to the carding machine incident, and he admitted to Orr, as he had to Lockwood, that Princeton was the scene of his first love.



NITOR, Grandview, Indiana, April 11, 1935.

HAS ARTICLES ASSOCIATED  
WITH LINCOLN HISTORY

Jacob Grigsby, a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Grigsby, Jr., and also a great-grandson of William Kelley, both of which families are known to have lived here during the Lincoln period, called Tuesday and let the editor handle and examine a hollow bone which he said was used to imitate a turkey call and that one day his grand-father, Reuben Grigsby shot the tassell off Sam Lamar's cap thinking it was the head of a turkey. He also showed a book—a Life of Washington—that Abe Lincoln gave his grand-mother, Betsy Ray Grigsby. Then, taking from his pocket a carefully wrapped package, he showed one of a pair of ear rings which he said Lincoln gave his grand-mother when he wanted her to marry him. It was a gold coin on a ring and is now quite well worn as he says he has carried it most of the time for sixty-one years. It was given him on his tenth birthday, he says. The other ring, a perfect mate, was lost by Lincoln's sweetheart before this gift was made to Mr. Grigsby. The book has lost its cover and title page, but we doubt not the genuineness of the story of its possession. Lincoln often visited this Grigsby family when the family lived at the present site of Grandview—then known as "Yellow Banks" by the settlers and "Sandy Creek Landing" by the steamboat and flatboat men.

# Abraham Lincoln's Sweetheart, Matilda Edwards, Married Reading Lawyer; Lived There

*Illustration by [unclear] Feb 9 - 1936*  
**H. O. Knerr Writes Highly Interesting Paper Concerning  
Mary Todd's Rival Who Later Took Up Residence in  
Reading and Lies Buried There—Stephen Douglas Also  
Smitten by Tall, Willowy Blonde Matilda**

That the sweetheart of Abraham Lincoln later married a man from Reading, Pa., and lived with him in the Berks capital is the interesting revelation to be found in the following article prepared by H. O. Knerr, 444 North Fulton street. Mr. Knerr is a student of Lincoln's life and has made much research into the career of the great emancipator. He kindly contributes the following to the Morning Call which is highly interesting since it brings so close to home the romantic story of Lincoln's disappointment in love.

History is full of personages whose achievements charm and dazzle the imagination. There is perhaps no name so familiar to men and nations than that of Abraham Lincoln. The perspective of more than half a century affords a view of this great character unseen by his contemporaries. Historical research has revealed and is still revealing much that was unknown to those who were privileged to associate with him. His rugged face has become one of the two or three best known in the world. John Buchan, the English historian, now governor general of Canada, has grandly said, "What I want to impress upon you about Lincoln is his tremendous greatness. Alone he took decisions which have altered the course of the world. When I study his career, behind all the lovable, quaint and often grotesque characteristics, what strikes me most is his

immense and lonely sublimity. He conducted the ordinary business of life in phrases of homespun simplicity, for, he was a plain man, loving his fellowmen, but when the crisis came he could stand alone." That a personality so mystical and inscrutable should enter into the warp and woof of our common heritage and remain an enigma, cannot fail to control and inspire us forever.

Let us unfetter fancy and wander over the old trails with a man whose humanity and greatness are the blessed heritage of a united country. In so doing, let us select the nearest approach to chronology regardless of its ramifications.

History and romance are a part of human progress and achievement. As twin sisters, they record some of the most thrilling episodes in the affairs of men. The decade of 1840 to 1850 is replete with personal accounts of social and political rivalry in the border states of the west. The facts are known to every student of American history. It was in the spring of 1840 that the migratory spirit exerted itself, due to the lure of settling in the vast prairie lands of the new Eldorado.

Incidentally, many of the so-called squatters hailed from the Atlantic seaboard and from the cotton belt of the south. It is a singular fact that the settlers represented a diversity of traits, customs and practices.

Partisan feeling, engendered by local pride and political affiliations, prevailed, and vital issues were often at stake.

By a strange combination of circumstances, there are available some fascinating episodes of pioneer days when the agitation of the slavery question aroused discussion. The scenery shifts as we enter the arena where men of recognized ability appear in the public debate. There are two outstanding orators who represent two opposing factions. The people are alert as they listen to the "Little Giant," Stephen A. Douglas, and the tall, lanky Abraham Lincoln. We will not go into further details concerning these statesmen of an earlier day, but, let us hark back to Springfield, Ill., where a future president is just entering the limelight.

There were quite a number of interesting and distinguished citizens in Springfield who were destined to link their names with the history of our country. Among them was the Hon. Ninian W. Edwards, whose uncle, Cyrus, served in the State Senate at the time the capital was transferred from Vandallia to Springfield.

The prestige of the Edwards family, both socially and politically, had a tendency to attract many of the elite of that time. Thither came Matilda Edwards of Alton to pay an extended visit to her cousin Ninian, whose wife, Elizabeth, was a sister to Mary Todd of Lexington, Kentucky. The two young ladies, Mary Todd and Matilda

Edwards, were rivals in the love affairs of the immortal Abraham Lincoln. Tradition tells us that the young ladies happened to occupy the same bed during their stay at the Edwards home. How they confided to each other the secrets of the human heart without manifesting any feelings of jealousy or resentment, we may conjecture.

It was at a cotillion party, sponsored by Mrs. Ninian Edwards, that Matilda met the tall, gaunt, and modest young lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, whose towering personality, primitive honesty and wit endeared him to the people of Springfield. A careful scrutiny of the guests assembled there will reveal some outstanding characteristics. The girls in the new capital were almost all Kentucky belles—the prevailing type being brunettes. Matilda was a blonde, tall, willowy, and graceful.

As a potential rival of Mary Todd, she was rather reserved but her charming personality served as a magnet to men like Douglass and Speed, who at one time or another proposed or hinted at marriage but were both rejected or unworthy and unfit for such high venture.

There are many versions regarding the romance of Abraham Lincoln. The biographers have evidently misconstrued the evidence in the matter. It was the fearless and trusted friend of Lincoln, Col. Ward H. Lamon, who has handed down first-hand testimony, and, there is no reason why we should not accept his version as reliable and

authentic. He says in part: "The love affairs of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were destined never to run smoothly. It was a season of misgivings, based on false illusions and dark forebodings. The appearance of Miss Matilda Edward wrought havoc. She fascinated and attracted many a suitor, and when Lincoln met her he felt his heart change. The Mary Todd affair, according to Stuart, Herndon, and Lincoln himself, was a 'policy match,' but with Miss Edwards it was love, pure and keen—a compelling force, a recurring dream that haunted Lincoln night and day." The fits of melancholy to which he was subject, seized him and controlled him for a long time. It was only after serious reflection that he concluded to render a statement to the lady from Lexington, in which he cited his reasons for cancelling his engagement to her.

The date known as the fatal first of January, 1841, had arrived and everything was in readiness for the wedding ceremony of Abraham Lincoln to Mary Todd, but the bridegroom failed to appear. Cause, insanity!

Herndon confidently believed that Lincoln's insanity grew out of an extraordinary complication of feelings—an aversion to the "policy match," and a counter-attachment to Miss Edwards.

Another friend of Lincoln's, I. H. Methany, said, "after a year of unspeakable mental anguish and dismal forebodings that could not be assuaged, Lincoln faced the ordeal of marriage—going like a lamb to the slaughter." It was only after a nightmare, weird and gloomy that he gained sufficient courage to yield to the "policy match."

That Lincoln hesitated so long at the brink of matrimony was due largely to his infatuation with Matilda Edwards. She was without doubt the idol of Lincoln's wavering affections—all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding.

There is something fantastic about this episode in Lincoln's life. The years of research have revealed very little concerning Matilda Edwards. It was after the close of the year 1842 that she returned to Alton where she was betrothed to the Hon. Newton D. Strong, of Reading, Pennsylvania.

According to the records in our local archives, Newton D. Strong, after graduating from Yale college, was appointed a tutor in his Alma Mater, a position he held for two years. At the request of his brother, William, he returned to Reading and assumed the study of law—being admitted to the bar of Berks county in 1835. After practicing his profession for a few years at Easton, Pa., he moved to Alton, Illinois, where he took a leading position as counselor and attorney.

There is very meagre data extant concerning the family life of Newton D. Strong. No children came to bless their life or perpetuate their names. Mrs. Strong was buried at Reading, February 9, 1851, three days before the forty-second anniversary of Lincoln's birth. That an old time sweetheart of Lincoln's reposes in the soil of Pennsylvania is significant and should engage our interest as patriotic and public spirited citizens.

The following letter from a niece of Matilda Edwards will substantiate the facts surrounding the episode in Lincoln's life.

Alton, Ill., March 22, 1935

Dear Sir:

Your letter to the Hayner Memorial



library has been given to me to answer as I am a granddaughter of Cyrus Edwards and a niece of Matilda Edwards Strong. Cyrus Edwards, son of Benjamin Edwards, was born in Montgomery county, Maryland, on his father's plantation—Mt. Pleasant. His boyhood and early manhood were spent there. William Wirt was a tutor in his family. Following the tide of immigration, the family moved to Kentucky, where they remained but a few years. The year 1817 Cyrus Edwards followed his brother, Ninian, to Illinois where in 1809 he had been elected territorial governor. Cyrus Edwards was a man of commanding presence, six feet four inches tall, always elegantly dressed, a lawyer and a politician. His oldest daughter, Matilda, was born at Elkton, Kentucky, August 1, 1822. She was a most fascinating and handsome girl, tall, graceful, and rather reserved. She moved at ease among the social and refined classes at Alton.

Abraham Lincoln was a frequent visitor at her father's house. It was on a visit to her cousin, Ninian, that she formed a warm friendship with Lincoln. Tradition tells us that Lincoln and Douglas were both in love with her.

Matilda Edwards married Newton D. Strong at "Woodlawn," the country home of her father near Alton. Her married life was of short duration, and she had no children to bless and perpetuate her name. Somewhere among the records of the old court house at Reading, Pennsylvania, you will find more of the life of Newton D. Strong and of his devoted wife, Matilda, who as a young lady, exerted a powerful influence in the life of the immortal Abraham Lincoln.

Pray believe me—

Truly yours,

Alice Edwards Quigley.

# Lincoln's Love Life Sadly Fascinating

N.Y.  
World  
Telegram  
2-25-38

## Herndon's Fragments Reveal President's Good Fortune in Politics Matched by Bad Luck in Romance

By DOROTHY DUNBAR BROMLEY.

If Abraham Lincoln had been a Frenchman and the culture of our country Gallic rather than Anglo-Saxon this great American's love life would have had more attention than it has had from biographers.

Now comes Emanuel Hertz's "The Hidden Lincoln," based on the papers of Lincoln's law partner, William H. Herndon, to reveal more of the man to us. The reading of these documents fascinates and saddens me, for the fragmentary references to Lincoln's amative life show that his good fortune and success in politics were matched by persistent bad fortune and failure in love.



Dorothy Dunbar  
Bromley.

So much romance has been woven about Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge that it is a satisfaction to get the real setting for their brief love affair. It is given in a letter to Herndon from Robert Rutledge, a younger brother of Ann's, who was 12 when 24-year-old Lincoln went to board with the Rutledge family in New Salem in 1833. Ann was then 20, a girl with light hair and blue eyes. She was, her brother recalled, "devoted to her duties of whatever character," was "studious," "the brightest mind of the family" and "possessed a remarkably amiable and lovable disposition." She had already had three suitors for her hand. William Berry and Samuel Hill had been rejected, but John McNamar, a young man from Ohio, described by the brother as "high-toned, honest and moral," won her favor and they became engaged. Later he returned to Ohio in the hope of bringing his parents to Illinois and was detained there for several years.

### Ann's Death Shatters Hopes of Happiness.

It was during this period, 1833-34, that Lincoln boarded with the Rutledges. With her fiancé absent Ann fell in love with the young surveyor. They made plans to marry as soon as he had finished his studies and she could honorably obtain release from McNamar. Lincoln's hopes of happiness must have been high in those days, but they were soon to be devastated by Ann's fatal illness.

A friend of Lincoln's, John Jones, later wrote Herndon, "I have every reason to believe that the relation existing between them was of the tenderest character. . . . During her last illness he visited her sick chamber and on his return stopped at my house. It was evident that he was much distressed, and I was not surprised when it was rumored subsequently that his reason was in danger."

Herndon believed, and repeats again and again, that Lincoln remained faithful to the memory of Ann all of his life. Yet Lincoln was too normal a man to be immune to women or to look forward to a life of celibacy. Next he courted Mary Owens, an accomplished young lady from Kentucky, who returned his esteem but not his affection.

### Sister Warns Against Marriage.

His third great and lasting frustration was his marriage to Mary Todd. She was another accomplished young lady from Kentucky who went to live with her sister, Mrs. N. W. Edwards, in Springfield. "Mary," said her sister, "was quick, lively, gay, frivolous, it may be social, and loved glitter, show and pomp and power." She was also ambitious, and in Kentucky had contended that she was destined to be the wife of some future President. Her judgment of men led her to select the raw-boned Lincoln in preference to Stephen A. Douglas as a suitor not long after the former began visiting her in 1839. Mrs. Edwards, noticing that Lincoln was always speechless in Mary's company, warned her sister that they were not suited to each other.

Lincoln, too, must have had his doubts about the wisdom of their union, since he failed to appear on the first date set for their wedding. Perhaps he could not forget Ann; perhaps he had become interested, as Herndon hints, in Miss Edwards, a sister-in-law of Mrs. Edwards. In any event, he went through another critical mental period. Later he was drawn back to Mary and was "safely married," to quote Lord Charnwood, in the year 1842.

Lincoln's subconscious—if it was that that warned him the first time—had been right. His marriage turned out to be what his partner, Herndon who was in a position to know, describes as "a domestic hell on earth." If Lincoln had appeared cold as a suitor, "abstracted, thoughtful, with no affection," he must have been equally unsatisfactory as a husband, with no affection, "the conspicuous observance of the bonds of matrimony."

### Hard to Forgive Her Tyranny.

Mary Todd, on her side, must have continued to smart from his defection on the first occasion, or, as Herndon thinks, from a conviction that her husband had never loved any woman but Ann Rutledge. Whatever her own mental conflict, she soon became the kind of termagant wife whom most men today would divorce with a clear conscience.

It is interesting, although idle, to speculate on the course Lincoln's life might have taken had Ann Rutledge lived and had they married. A man of Lincoln's depth and sensitivity would have been capable, I should think, of a great, lifelong affection. He may have had a ruthless streak in his nature, as every great man has, but Herndon is anything but consistent when he says at one point, "Lincoln had no quality for a husband. He was abstracted, cool, never loved, and could not from his very nature."

Possibly if Lincoln had had a happier personal life he might have been less the man of sorrows who so well understood mankind's suffering. His loss may have been the country's gain.



5

REV. JOSEPH VANDERBURGH SOMES  
1827 EAST FIFTY-NINTH STREET  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Dear Dr. Warren -

Chief Justice Curtis G.

Shake has handed me "Lincoln  
Love", dated December 1, 1941,  
stating that a grand daughter of  
my great<sup>2</sup> grandfather was a traditional  
Lincoln Sweetheart.

There is error in this  
paragraph, and I would appreciate  
"references" used in this number.

It is interesting, and  
I would like to pursue it further.

Gratefully.

Father Somes

December 7,  
1941

December 11, 1941

Rev. Joseph Vanderburgh Some  
1827 E. 59th St.  
Indianapolis, Indiana

My dear Father Some:

I regret exceedingly that I cannot give you the date of the newspaper clipping, a photostat of which I forwarded, as it came to us with a lot of clippings which were undated.

From the back of the clipping I rather gather that it may have been in 1907 but I do not know where the paper was published.

Very truly yours,

LAW:WM

Director



# Interesting Little States Adm.

**C**OL. FREEMAN THORP, who sketched Lincoln very often, and whose painting of him was accepted by the Senate, saw no uncountness in him, just "a tall, spare, but well formed, muscular man, very erect, with impressive, plain, unassuming bearing."

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**W**ITH a desire to be a useful member of the community, Lincoln, when he became of age, embarked in various business ventures, and every one of them without exception was signally disastrous. They fastened upon him a burden of debt which he carried for twenty years and never did dispose of until 1849, his fortieth year, after his election to Congress. He called it the "national debt." It amounted to \$1,100 and was in the form of promissory notes. When these notes became due, all the creditors consented to renew them, except one. This man brought suit, obtained judgment, issued an execution and levied upon the surveying implements which Lincoln called the things which kept soul and body together. The date of sale came, but down the dusty road that day came James Short, a farmer, and he bought all the things at the sale and laid them at Lincoln's feet and said, "Here, begin again." Thirty-two years afterward Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, heard that James Short was destitute on the western border of Nebraska, and as fast as steam and train (and pony express) could carry it, he sent aid and comfort, succor and support. He showed his gratitude after thirty-two years—and that is why men loved him.

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**L**INCOLN was a paragon among lovers. He says he was awkward and bashful in the time when "young men's fancies lightly turn to thoughts of love." At different times four women so treated him that he even felt justified in proposing marriage. Ann Rutledge, Mary Owens, Sarah Riekard and Mary Todd—these four we know he loved, though he did not equal Washington's record of devotion to five different girls within ten years. Timidity in polite society was a characteristic of Lincoln's whole life.

Those who knew him best assert that his affection once evoked was impetuous and fervent. Above the lonely grave in Menard county of Ann Rutledge his great heart broke. To that lovely girl he had told the old, old story as he escorted her to the quilting bee. The owner of a quilt made in those days used to show to all interested the very uneven and irregular stitches which Ann Rutledge made as her heart and soul throbbed and thrilled with joy when, sitting by her side as she stitched at the quilting frame, Lincoln told that story of man's love for woman, sweet as it is old and old as it is sweet.

"All the world loves a lover." And no one will love Lincoln less because of the historical fact that his reason, or at least his hope and interest in life departed from him when Ann died. Yes, that heart and soul and mind and intellect which in later years could contemplate unmoved a world in arms were all dethroned because a sweet girl died. It was five



well as Andrew Jackson, later President of the United States, and John Quincy Adams, former President of the United States. The speaker was Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts. The hall of the House then was what is now Statuary Hall. Lincoln's seat was in the back row, number 191, and on his right sat John Van Dyke of New Jersey, and directly in front sat Lewis C. Levin of Pennsylvania. Alexander H. Stephens sat five seats away from Lincoln. The latter wrote

**LINCOLN TOLD THAT STORY OF MAN'S LOVE FOR WOMAN, SWEET AS IT IS OLD, AND OLD AS IT IS SWEET.**

long years before any other woman attracted him. Then two in somewhat rapid succession became recipients of his regard. Although esteeming him, they rejected him. When he did finally marry, ten years later, he was a model husband, as Mary Todd Lincoln was a model wife.

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**A** KIND friend, after Ann Rutledge's death, took Mr. Lincoln to his little home in a secluded spot, hidden in the hills, and there slowly and gradually brought him back to reason after weeks upon weeks of suffering. In 1842 that kind friend—Bowling Greene—died, and Lincoln was selected to deliver a funeral oration. He rose to speak, but the old, dear memories crowded upon him. He broke down, his voice choked, his lips quivered, the tears poured down his cheeks. After repeated efforts, finding it absolutely impossible to speak, he strode away, bitterly sobbing. Every heart was touched by the spectacle. It was probably the most effective oration he ever attempted.

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**A**MONG Lincoln's colleagues in the House were Robert Toombs, Howell Cobb, David Wilmot, Horace Greeley, also Alexander H. Stephens, late Confederate vice president, as

to a friend on February 2, 1848, as follows:

"I just take my pen to say that Mr. Stephens of Georgia, a little, slim, pale-faced, consumptive man, with a voice like Judge Logan's, has just concluded the very best speech of an hour's length I ever heard. My old, withered, dry eyes are full of tears yet. If he writes it out anything like he delivered it, our people shall see many copies of it."

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**L**INCOLN, Robert Ingersoll says, did not believe in God, but Robert McIntyre answers that he must have believed in God, because God undoubtedly believed in him. Lincoln cherished his Bible, studied it and carried it with him on the old circuit from court to court. With the Bible he also carried the plays of Shakespeare, the fables of Aesop and "The Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan, and also the "Washington" of Weems. That was the vital part of the meager library, of the equipment of the lawyer and statesman of those days.

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**I**N word and deed Lincoln advocated that young men should fit themselves for public office and then seek it. When the list of offices and positions and honors to which Abraham Lincoln aspired, and for the attain-

ment of which he strove, is considered, it presents an array sufficient to astound every advocate of the theory that "the office should seek the man, and not the man the office."

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THE captaincy of a military company, the postmastership of a village, the deputy surveyorship of a county, the circuit judgeship pro tempore, the office of member of the legislature, the position of delegate to a convention, the office of commissioner of the land office, the position of congressman, the honorary position of presidential elector, the office of governor of a territory, the position of secretary of a territory, the United States senatorship and the presidency of the United States—a round dozen political positions, one of which he held four times, and a number of which he held more than once—were all considered by him worthy of his aspiration and regard.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN was a good lawyer, a good diplomat, a good student of finance and a fair general, a fair engineer and a fair poet—as well as being one of the three greatest Presidents.

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LINCOLN himself used to tell how his wife locked him out the night he was elected President. Mrs. Julia A. Bradner of Bloomington, when she was ninety-five years old, recalled that she was in Springfield with her sister at the time of Lincoln's election, and they called to offer congratulations. He was in jovial mood, and, pointing to Mrs. Lincoln, said: "She locked me out." Mrs. Lincoln hastily chided him: "Don't ever tell that again," but he laughed and went with the story.

Mrs. Lincoln told him when he went down town in the evening to hear the returns that if he wasn't home by 10 o'clock she would lock him out. And she did so. But when she heard the music coming to serenade them she turned the key again in a hurry.

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LINCOLN won a famous murder case once by producing an almanac in court to prove that a certain night was dark and cloudy, where the prosecution claimed it was moonlight. Duff Armstrong was the man freed from the charge of murder on a camp meeting ground. He joined the church and was an ardent lifelong champion of "Honest Abe" Lincoln.

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LINCOLN'S simplicity was shown at one time when he was addressing a jury. He had a habit of getting close to the jury box and gesticulating with his long arms extended over their heads. One day while thus engaged his suspenders gave way in the middle of his argument. He looked down and found a button pulled off. "Excuse me, gentlemen, for a minute while I fix my tackling," he said. Then he stepped over to the woodbox by the courtroom stove, picked up a splinter, took out his knife and whittled the splinter to a point, thrust this wooden pin through the cloth, hooked the suspender loop over it and returned to his pleading.



**Refused the Awkward Youth Because She Did Not Love Him.**

The woman who was Abraham Lincoln's first love and refused to marry him, has long been a resident of Calistoga, Cal. She is now Mrs. Susan Boyce, but when she was Lincoln's sweetheart she was Miss Susan Reid of New Salem, on the Sangamon river, in Illinois. Speaking of her acquaintance with President Lincoln, she said:

"My father was one of Lincoln's best friends. He was Lewis C. Reid, and it was he who took Lincoln to Springfield and introduced him to William E. Seward, from whom he borrowed the first law books he ever read. Mr. Lincoln and my father belonged to the same political party, and they used to talk politics by the hour. I first met him in 1836 at the house of a neighbor named Able. There was quite a party of young people there, and I remember that he seemed very bashful. He soon began to pay me a good deal of attention, which pleased my father more than it did me, for my father liked him very much and had great faith in him. Mr. Lincoln often took me out horseback riding and to singing school and church. He was a Spiritualist and he believed in dreams. He often told me his dreams were prophetic. He also talked of the stars a great deal, and I remember I thought him a queer kind of fellow. Still, he was very entertaining, and he studied hard all the time.

"He was not as ardent a lover as I've seen since, but he kept his case going pretty lively, and pressed me hard for an answer. He told me I was the first woman he ever loved, and that he was sure he could never love anyone else as he did me, and I believe he meant what he said. I did not want to marry him, because I didn't love him, and so I invented a story about being engaged to a young man back in Kentucky, where we had come from. That cooled his ardor for a little while, but he soon began coming to see me again, and finally he told my father that he would call on a certain day for my final answer. When the day came I made it a point to be away from home, and Lincoln didn't get over the way I treated him. My father lectured me about it and told me I had made a dunce of myself, but my mother took my part, and said that if I did not love him I ought not to marry him.

"I never heard Mr. Lincoln make a speech, and I never saw him after 1837. My father scolded me so much for refusing his offer that I married rather sooner than I might otherwise have done in order to escape being lectured. My husband was a friend of Lincoln's, and they fought side by side in the Black Hawk war."

No date No File

# WOMAN ONCE WOODED BY ABE LINCOLN IS DEAD

Granddaughter of a Judge Ap-  
pointed by President  
Washington.

WAS 85 YEARS OF AGE

Friends Say Mrs. Mary Francis  
Relly Idealized the Martyred  
Executive.

SIOUX CITY, Iowa, March 3.

A woman to whom Abraham Lincoln made a proposal of marriage in 1839, and who refused the offer of the young man who was destined to rank among the greatest Presidents of the United States, died in Sioux City at the age of 85 years. She was Mrs. Mary Frances Relly, granddaughter of Henry Vanderbergh, whom President Washington appointed one of the first judges of the Northwest territory.

It was at Quincy, Ill., where Mrs. Relly spent her girlhood and where she met and won the love of young Lincoln. That his suit was not entirely in vain was evidenced throughout the later years of Mrs. Relly's life. She idealized the martyr President. Queries of curious friends as to the episode of their love match were ever turned aside by an expression of the tender veneration in which she held his memory.



## TO MARRY ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Woman Reputed to Have Given  
Mitten to Great American  
Dies in Sioux City.

SIOUX CITY, Ia., Jan. 28.—A woman to whom Abraham Lincoln is said to have made a proposal of marriage in 1839 and who refused the offer of the young man who was destined to rank among the greatest Presidents of the United States, died in Sioux City Sunday at the age of 85 years. She was Mrs. Mary Frances Relley, granddaughter of Henry Vanderbergh, whom President Washington appointed one of the first Judges of the Northwest Territory.

It was at Quincy, Ill., where Mrs. Relley spent her girlhood and where she met and won the love of young Lincoln. That his suit was not entirely in vain was evidenced throughout the later years of Mrs. Relley's life. She idealized the dead President. The queries of curious friends as to the episodes of their love match were ever turned aside by an expression of the tender veneration in which she held his memory.

# A ROMANCE OF LINCOLN.

MAZETTA HOLDSTOCK BROWN.

A perfect day in the hazy October found us speeding through the beautiful blue grass region of Kentucky. Unless one has seen the hill country, he can not appreciate its beauty. In the soft air the lines change constantly, but imperceptibly, ever bringing a new scene; here a hill touched with patches of brown, there a hill with its waving grass, giving the lights and shades in such variety one is reminded of the ever restless sea; farther away a hill upon which some cattle are grazing, their forms outlined against the fiery red of the setting sun. The eye is satisfied with the swiftly moving panorama. We are en route to the capital city—Frankfort. Frankfort is a quaint old town, surrounded by high hills—grave sentinels they are, protecting the city on every side.

The Kentucky river, the theme of so much song and romance, cuts the city into two parts, and these parts are connected by a bridge. The streets are shaded by large trees—so much taller and fuller than our shade trees of the North that we pause to admire the beautiful archways they make. The old State House, with its beautiful grounds—a building nearly a hundred years old, low and broad. Great pillars support the porch. We enter, to find the halls narrow, the stairways narrow, the rooms small. We, with proper respect for its age and dignity, walk softly. We look with pleasure upon old portraits of Boone, Clay and other Kentucky noblemen. Our friend and guide says: "Are you tempted to laugh at our old State House?" And we reply: "Would we laugh at the first really old thing we ever saw? We, of the North, value things only for their 'spick-and-spaness.'" The Southerner points with pride to the building one hundred years old, or to the house where Governor or General, or some worthy, lived sixty years ago. Everything is old. The houses are large and square, with spacious verandas; the grounds are large; the sides and rear protected by walls six feet high; the lawns are not kept as ours, but are crowded with shrubs and bushes. Half obscuring the house that sits well to the rear, one is impressed with the thought that here the people have plenty of room and plenty of time.

A visit to Frankfort is lost unless one climbs the hill to the beautiful city of the dead. Up a winding road to the summit of one of the highest hills, the quiet city lies beneath us, the forest-crowned hills putting off their garments of crimson and gold on either side. The beautiful river seems to search out this place, kiss its feet and flows back on itself,

looking like two rivers from our point of view, so abrupt a curve does it make.

Here, in wide terraces that are cut in the side of the hill, lie "those that sleep." Memory is busy as we enter the sacred enclosure. The monument erected to the Confederate soldiers is pointed out to us, with circles of headstones around it, telling of those that fell, and very near a monument to the Union dead, with like headstones about it. The victor and the vanquished are here at peace. Here lie the bones of Daniel Boone, a little apart from the rest, cut off by a growth of trees. A tall, square monument marks the place. The vaudal has been here and chipped the stone. It is discolored by age and weather, but it is the pride of the Kentuckian. About us many of Kentucky's sons lie dead—dead—it is a cold and cheerless word to apply to those that live in our hearts and whose names are household words and whose influence must go on forever.

It was our fortune to be the guest of one of the first families of Kentucky. After a supper at which we tasted, for the first time, the famous corn bread, and found it good, we gathered about the great open fire and listened to stories of the South. The grandmother's fund of stories was large—so the children told me, and I was advised to coax her to tell about "when she was young." The daughter, to turn the story-telling in the right direction, commenced: "You see, mother knew Lincoln very well." "Indeed," said I, delighted, "tell us about him."

"Well, you see," she began with that delightful Southern accent which Northern people cannot acquire. "I was on a visit to my brother, Col. H., of Springfield, when I first met Mr. Lincoln. He was so tall the first time I stood beside him I noticed that I only came above his elbow, and so awkward I was always sorry for him. He did not seem to know what to say in the company of women; I think I never heard him say anything then that he would claim as original. He always prefaced his remarks with: 'I read a little thing the other day,' or 'some one told me,' and then he would relate some anecdote or quote some saying that was appropriate. I don't believe now that he ever read all these stories. I believe he made them up, because he was too bashful to say the things he wanted to say."

"While he was never at ease with women, with men he was a favorite companion. I have heard my brother say his memory was remarkable—he was able to remember the names of even casual acquaintances."

"Mother hasn't told you that Lincoln was her beau." The blood rushed to grandmother's face as she said: "Oh, now, daughter—"

"But it's true, mother."

"Yes," the old lady continued. "I

was just a young girl, and Mr. Lincoln being my brother's friend naturally paid me some attention; but Mary Todd stole him from me." She said it laughingly, but the black eyes flashed as she spoke.

"Mary Todd was my cousin, and came out from Kentucky to see us and spend some time with her sister, Mrs. Edwards. She was a pretty girl, but we all didn't like her very well—she had such a bad temper, and was the most ambitious girl I ever saw. At first she made fun of my homely friend, but when she found out how clever he was she said to me: 'I'll take him away from you, I've always said I wanted to marry the President, and I believe he will be the president; so I intend he shall marry me.'"

"Stephen Douglas wanted Mary, and she told me she loved him the best, but she accepted Lincoln. I don't know why," and the old lady mused awhile before she continued. "Your father," she said, turning to her daughter, "came to see me then, we were promised and our wedding day was set. Such a strange thing occurred on that day. Mary Todd wrote some articles for the paper under the name of 'Aunt Rebecca,'

ridiculing James Shields as a conceited Irishman. Mr. Shields would rather die than be laughed at; so he went to the editor and demanded the name of the author, saying that if he didn't give it to him he would hold the editor personally responsible. The editor knew that Lincoln and Mary were engaged, so he went to him and asked his advice. Lincoln told him to tell Shields that he wrote the articles. As soon as Mr. Shields heard it he took Gen. Whitesides as his second and started after Lincoln to challenge him to a duel. Lincoln accepted, and they decided on broadswords of the largest size as the weapons. My brother heard that they were going out, and he started after them to persuade them to give it up. Lincoln was glad to do so, for the whole thing seemed like a farce to him. They returned to Springfield on the evening of my wedding, and brother brought them both up to the house. They did not have time to change their clothes, so they appeared as they were, to the astonishment of all our guests.

"I never will forget the day that was to have been their wedding day. We all were there—the wedding supper was ready to serve. Mary went up to her room and I went with her to help her dress—she did look pretty—that's a fact. We waited



and waited, but Lincoln did not come. I thought Mary would go wild, she was so angry, then she was so mortified. I thought she would die when we heard the guests leaving the house, and the servants going about putting out the lights. Rising from the bed where she had thrown herself in all her bridal finery, with a tragic air, she bade us leave her, and to put out the lights, and there Mary Todd fought out her battle alone. I'm afraid some of us were not as sorry for her as we might have been. Lincoln told my brother that he thought he did not love her as he should and that he would do her a great wrong if he married her. He was so conscientious and felt so keenly the injustice he had done her, that it preyed upon his mind and nearly drove him insane. His friends feared that he might be tempted to take his own life; so Joshua Speed brought him

down here into Kentucky, near his old home, and here he again found peace of mind.

"I guess no one knows how they ever came together again, but I've always thought that she made up her mind that night that he should marry her at the cost of her pride to show us all that she was not defeated.

"They were married in Springfield before a large company in 1842. Lincoln was always so kind and considerate to Cousin Mary. My brother was with him when he received the telegram announcing his nomination to the presidency. He said: 'Gentlemen, there's a little woman at my house who is more interested in this dispatch than I am. You must excuse me while I take it up to her.' We all thought when we heard it, Mary will be satisfied now.

"I took the children and went on to Washington to the inauguration. When Mr. Lincoln came on the platform we saw that he had a fine new suit of clothes, but looked extremely uncomfortable, and held a silk hat—a style he never wore. When he came to the front, he looked around anxiously for some place to put it, and seemed to be weighing the question as to whether that new possession should be intrusted to the floor or held in his hand. Stephen A. Douglas saw his dilemma, came forward, took his hat and held it until he had finished the address. Lincoln and Douglas had been rivals all their lives. They served in the Legislature together, were both in love with Mary Todd, were rivals for the Senatorship, and finally were rivals for the Presidency. Yet of all the congratulations received upon this day, it is said there were none more sincere and heartfelt than that of Stephen A. Douglas.

"It was just before the war that my first boy, Henry, was born. A day or two after my husband received a message to present himself to the President at 6 o'clock in the morning of the next Wednesday. Promptly at the time indicated, he was admitted to the office where Lincoln sat alone; he was sitting in front of the old fireplace in the room that he called his work-shop, with a foot on each side of the fender, his head buried in his hands—he looked as if he had been up all night. As my husband entered he raised his head and said, 'How is Martha and that boy?' Being assured of our welfare, he pointed to a chair and said, 'What do you want?' After a long talk about the desirability of certain places, he said, 'I will make you consul to Panama, and may God bless you and yours.'

"We were in Panama five years, so we escaped the war. My dear husband died there, and I came home with my children to find my beloved South ruined—my slaves free—my dear friend Lincoln the victim of an assassin's hand, and many of my loved ones sleeping on that hill-side you visited this afternoon. You will excuse me now—I'm an old woman, and love to live in the past," and with a smile she left us before we found voice to thank her for her story.



BRAHAM LINCOLN was a lover, but he was an unusual lover just as he was unusual in every other way. His first recorded affair of the heart, an emotion deeper than the calf love of half-grown youth, came when he was twenty-two years old and clerking in a store at New Salem, Ill. Ann Rutledge, tavernkeeper's daughter, was the girl.

The second affair came when he was about twenty-six. It began as a joke, after Lincoln had become a lawyer and was practicing at Springfield, but it caused him untold worry—because the girl, Mary Owens, was fat and he didn't want to marry her. The third affair "took." That is, Mary Todd became Abraham Lincoln's wife, when he was thirty-three years old.

When he was a youth in the wilds of southern Indiana, Lincoln had his sentimental vaporings, one of which appealed so strongly to his sense of romance that he wanted to write a story about it. This vaporing was the kind most of us have along about the time the down on our upper lip begins to toughen.

It is doubtful if Ann Rutledge ever loved Lincoln. She simply appreciated his sympathy and affection—she had been jilted by James McNeill, who tired of her and went East to escape his obligation. Her father, James Rutledge, one of the founders of New Salem, kept a tavern, and there Lincoln went to board when in 1831 he left his home and became clerk in a store there.

At breakfast, dinner and supper he sat by the side of the tavernkeeper's daughter. He was twenty-two; she was less than twenty. She was sad of heart and he tried to cheer her. Lincoln's sympathy ripened into deep affection, but the girl was faithful for more than a year to the memory of McNeill.

Even if the girl had been willing, Lincoln was in no position to marry. He was very poor. He was one of the first to volunteer in the Black Hawk war. When the war was ended he returned to New Salem, ran for the legislature and was defeated. His financial condition was so muddled at this time that he seriously contemplated becoming a blacksmith in order to make a living. An opportunity came to him to get an interest in a store without putting up any real money. He was a wretched storekeeper and his partner was no better. The business did not flourish, but his courtship did. He and Ann Rutledge sat at night on the tavern steps or walked along the roads around the little settlement.

They were young and youth is the age of glamour. Lincoln was beginning to think of a career as a lawyer. He believed he would be able in a year or two to support a wife. Ann could not forget McNeill, but the devotion of Lincoln prevailed and she consented to marry him.

The summer of their engagement was the happiest, perhaps, in all of Lincoln's life. Ann Rutledge was beautiful in face and figure and charming in every way. She was not tall and was rather delicate. At times when she would become a little weary, Lincoln, whose strength was unusual, delighted in taking her up in his arms and carrying her as if she were a child.

With their engagement everything seemed to brighten for Lincoln. He was appointed postmaster, he began to make a little money doing survey work, and in the fall he was elected to the legislature.

The young couple decided to get married in the spring. Ann, anxious to complete her education, decided to go to Jacksonville to attend an academy there during the winter. Meanwhile, Lincoln went to Springfield to attend the session of the legislature, continue his law studies and prepare for his admission to the bar in the spring.

He was in Springfield when he got a message

that nearly broke his heart. Ann Rutledge was dead. At the academy she contracted a fever and died in a few days. Lincoln was predisposed to melancholia. The death of the woman he loved so much almost upset his reason. He never fully recovered from his grief.

Ann Rutledge had been dead two or three years when Lincoln became engaged again. In Springfield there lived a Mrs. Able, with whom he was well acquainted. She had a sister, Mary Owens of Kentucky, who visited Springfield for a short time and to whom Lincoln had been introduced. Mary Owens was bright, clever and buxom. She returned to Kentucky and Lincoln probably forgot her. But one day Mrs. Able informed him that she was going to Kentucky and, then, in a spirit of banter, she said to Lincoln:

"I'll bring Mary back if you'll agree to marry her."

"Marry her? I'd be delighted," said Lincoln.

Mrs. Able went away and a month or so later she was in Springfield again and she had her sister with her.

Lincoln went to call. When he saw Mary Owens he gasped. The girl had grown enormously. She had become outrageously fat.

"Well, I've brought her back for you to marry according to promise," said Mrs. Able.

She was joking, but Lincoln wasn't sure whether it was a jest or whether she was serious and was cloaking her feelings in the light manner in which she spoke. He called regularly upon Miss Owens and paid to her all the attention he thought an engaged man should. It was not pleasant, however, for she was enormous in size. To make the situation still more absurd, he was very tall and very thin. The contrast between the two was enough to make any person smile, no matter how gloomy he might be.

Lincoln worried greatly over the situation. He felt that he was in honor bound to marry the lady, but he dreaded the taking of such a step.

But while Lincoln had due regard for the sanctity of his promise, implied or otherwise, he tried hard to make Miss Owens understand that he was not a desirable partner for life. He wrote to her some of the queerest love letters that perhaps any man ever penned. He told her over and over again what a miserable life she would have with him. In one of them he said:

"I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here in Springfield, which it would be your doom to see without sharing. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently?"

Another time he wrote to her:

"I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you. What you have said to me may have been in the way of jest, or I may have misunderstood it. If so, then let it be forgotten; if otherwise, I wish you would think seriously before you decide. What I have said I would most positively abide by, provided you wish it. My opinion is that you had better not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship and it may be more serious than you now imagine. I know you are capable of thinking concretely on any subject and if you deliberate maturely upon this before you decide, then I am willing to abide your decision."

#### Lovers' Tears and Quarrels.

Evidently Miss Owens had some spirit. She sent a reply to one of his letters that stunned him. She rejected him incontinently, and she piqued his pride in doing it, for she told him that he was "deficient in those links which make up the chain of a woman's happiness."

You would not think of Lincoln as a dancing man, yet he did at times indulge in that pastime.



There are some records extant in proof of this. They take the form of cotillion notices printed at the time he was thirty years old and a little before his meeting with Mary Todd.

Like Mary Owens, Mary Todd was a Kentuckian, and, like Mary Owens, she had a sister.

in Springfield. Her sister was the wife of W. Edwards, one of the most prominent men of Springfield. Miss Todd was bright, witty, highly educated, ambitious, and at once became the belle of Springfield. Few young women have had more great men suitors for their hand than had Miss Todd within one month of her arrival. Among those who paid ardent attention to her were Stephen A. Douglas, James Shields, who later was senator from three states and who made a glorious record in three wars; Abraham Lincoln, and a dozen others.

The Edwards family protested against Miss Todd's partiality for Lincoln. They thought his family was plebeian; they thought, too, he was too grave a man. But Miss Todd loved Lincoln and they became engaged.

They were not altogether happy in their engagement. Miss Todd was jealous and exacting. She loved balls and parties, frivolities of all sorts that are so dear to women. Lincoln did not care much for those things and was shockingly thoughtless and inattentive for an engaged man. When there was some merrymaking, if he didn't want to go, he didn't think she'd care. She, however, thought it a slight. She complained that he neglected her. Then, to make him feel bad about it, she would go with Shields or with Douglas. There were tears, reproaches, quarrels. They would make up and fall out again.

All this had a very bad effect upon Lincoln. He became extremely morbid. He began to search his soul to answer the question as to whether or not he would make the woman's life unhappy. They were to have been married on January 1, 1842. Something happened and the wedding did not take place. There was a story, which was credited to W. H. Herndon, that Lincoln failed to appear, but this has been pronounced untrue by those who ought to know. It is more likely that one of their many quarrels led to the break between them.

Some of Lincoln's letters written about this time disclose his sufferings. In one of them he says:

"I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better I cannot tell. I fear I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible."

#### Reconciliation and Marriage.

One of his friends in Kentucky invited him there in the hope of cheering him up. He had a hard time arousing Lincoln from his melancholia, but he finally succeeded in a manner he never expected. The friend fell in love himself and began to feel qualmish as to whether he would make his beloved happy. He became so miserable over his doubt in this regard that Lincoln tried to cheer him up, and in trying to cheer his friend, Lincoln cheered up himself.

When Lincoln returned to Illinois he was much better. He and Miss Todd met and there was a reconciliation.

On November 4, following, Lincoln and Mary

Todd were married. While the marriage ceremony was being performed one of the greatest storms in the history of Springfield was raging.

"Did you ever write out a story in your mind?" Lincoln once asked a friend. "I did when I was a young fellow. One day a wagon with a lady and two girls and a man broke down near us and while they were fixing up they cooked in our kitchen. The woman had books and read us stories, and they were the first of the kind I ever had heard. I took a great fancy to one of the girls, and when they were gone I thought of her a great deal, and one day when I was sitting out in the sun by the house I wrote out a story in my mind.

"I thought I took my father's horse and followed the wagon, and finally I found it, and they were surprised to see me. I talked with the girl and persuaded her to elope with me; and that night I put her on the horse and we started off across the prairie. After several hours we came to a camp, and when we rode up we found it was the one we had left a few hours before, and we went in.

"The next night we tried again, and the same thing happened—the horse came back to the same place; and then we concluded that we ought not to elope. I stayed until I had persuaded her father to give her to me. I always meant to write that story out and publish it, and I began once, but I concluded it was not much of a story. But I think that was the beginning of love with me."

Abraham Lincoln as we have come to know him appeals to all men because he is so like what all men want to be. He appeals to all boys because he shows them their possibilities. He appeals to all women because he is so much the lover and because he proves that the strongest manhood may be as tender as the gentlest womanhood.



## THREE AFFAIRS OF THE HEART



LINCOLN once told a friend of the "beginning of love" with him. With all his love for people, for helpless creatures, and especially for the unfortunate, his love for women and his grief over their loss almost broke his great heart. Some of his biographers hint that he was more than half in love with Kate Robey, "the pretty girl of the settlement," whom he helped, by pantomime, in spelling the word defied. She married Allen Gentry, son of the leading man of the village—after he and Allen made their first trip to New Orleans.

While living in New Salem he fell in love with Ann, the beautiful daughter of James Rutledge, who owned the mill and kept the tavern where Lincoln boarded part of the time. Ann was engaged to a young man named McNamar who had gone east to take care of his dying father. Some time after McNamar ceased writing to her Ann plighted her troth to Abraham, but the anxiety and humiliation of her first love's neglect was too much for her sensitive, high-strung nature, and she died of brain fever, in August, 1835. Her distracted lover was unnerved by his passionate grief. It was while he was in a morbid, half-insane frame of mind that he learned to love William Knox's lengthy poem entitled: "O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

Then he threw himself with greater zest than ever into politics, and success seemed to crown his every effort. Some time after this a friend in New Salem, Mrs. Bennett Able, tried to "make a match" between him and her sister Mary Owens, a "bluegrass beauty" from Kentucky. Lincoln seemed to think he had committed himself to marry this young woman, if she had been led to expect him to, and wrote her to that effect, giving her a rather discouraging outlook upon the future of a poor young attorney in the State capital. She, as became a young lady of spirit and good sense, released him from his supposed obligation and refused him outright. In his first relief over this release he wrote an impulsive and indiscreet letter to a friend who was thoughtless or malicious enough to permit it to get into print, greatly to the annoyance and grief of Lincoln and his family.

The great and final affair of his heart was with a bright and witty young lady who came from Louisville, Kentucky, to live with her sister, the wife of Ninian W. Edwards, of Springfield, one of Lincoln's friends among "the Long Nine." This was Miss Mary Todd, a pretty cousin of his law-partner, John T. Stuart. She had from the first a great fascination for Abraham Lincoln, and they were soon betrothed. But "the course of true love never did run smooth." Lincoln was morbid and self-disparaging, and Miss Todd was high-strung and exacting, and the engagement was broken. Lincoln, in his distress and despair, visited his friend Speed, with whom he had lodged when he first came to Springfield, from Louisville, Kentucky, and tried to forget his over-mastering passion. But there was no other way but for their lives to be united. In his love and gallantry he fought—or was ready to fight—an absurd duel for her sake. Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married in the beautiful home of Ninian W. Edwards, at Springfield, Illinois, on the 4th of November, 1842.



Globe Tavern, where the Lincolns first lived after their marriage

## LINCOLN AS A LOVER.

In his exquisite essay on "Love," Emerson asks, "What do we wish to know of any worthy person so much as how he has sped in the history of this sentiment?" The idea applies with surpassing force to great men and their affairs of the heart; for great men, in common with small ones, are subject to this most interesting and inexplicable passion. That foremost of Americans, Abraham Lincoln, was not different in this respect from the average citizen; and the fact that the remains of his first sweetheart, Ann Rutledge, have lately been re-claimed from an obscure grave and placed beneath a handsome monument may fitly serve as a reason for recalling those incidents of his career which go to show what manner of man he was in his dealings with the other sex. Though never a handsome individual, and still less an accomplished one in the social sense, he seems to have been singularly susceptible to feminine charms; and what is still more strange, the young ladies appear to have manifested a good deal of partiality for him, in spite of his homely face and awkward behavior.

There can be no doubt that he loved Ann Rutledge in a sincere and absorbing way; and probably she was the only one of her sex that he ever did truly love. He first met her at New Salem, Ill., where he was a boarder in her father's family, and a clerk in one of the village stores. He was then 24, and she 17. All accounts say that she was beautiful, having auburn hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion; and her ways were of the winning kind that insure general popularity. Lincoln was not her first admirer, however. There was another suitor, John McNeill, an enterprising and prosperous young merchant, who fell in love with her and became engaged to her while Lincoln stood bashfully in the background. But after a time McNeill went to New York, and his absence was prolonged until it broke the engagement. Then Lincoln's chance came, and he soon gained the girl's consent to marry him. He was poor, he told her, and she must wait until he could complete his law studies. She consented to the delay, and it proved to be calamitous. Her lingering regard for McNeill and the sorrow attached to it undermined her health, and in the course of a few months she died. That was fifty-five years ago; and it speaks well for human nature that the sad romance of her life and death yet survives, and that her ashes are thought worthy of memorial honor.

The effect of this blow upon Lincoln was peculiarly distressing, and there is good reason to believe that it deepened his natural tendency to melancholy through all his future life. For a time, he was really on the verge of insanity. He neglected his business, avoided his friends, and wandered day after day in the woods alone with his awful grief. "On stormy nights," says his old employer, who is still living, "when the wind blew the rain against the roof, Abe would set that in the grocery, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands, and the tears running through his fingers. I hated to see him feel so bad, and I'd say, 'Abe, don't cry; and he'd look up and say, 'I can't help it, Bill, the rain's a-rainin' on her.'" His condition finally became so alarming that his friends sent him away from the town and placed him under close watch for several weeks, until he regained control of himself. The experience was one that left a permanent weight upon his heart. He learned to conceal it, but not to forget it. Two years later, he said to a fellow-member of the Legislature that "although he seemed to others to enjoy life rapturously, yet when alone he was so overcome by mental depression that he never dared to carry a pocket-knife." Yes, he certainly loved Ann Rutledge. It was the

one great passion of a strong and noble nature, never to be duplicated. Only once in a lifetime does any man thus care for a woman, let the cynics say what they may. Hearts do break past mending sometimes in this fickle and ironical world; and it so happens, alas! that in such cases it is the best of men who are the victims.

Lincoln's next adventure of a sentimental character, was with a Miss Mary Owens, a young lady from Kentucky, who was visiting her sister in New Salem. She differed from Miss Rutledge in having an excellent education and a wealthy father; but she was of a similar type of beauty, though larger and more dignified. According to her own story, she never loved him, but admired his sterling qualities and was pleased with his devotion. His lack of training was his principal drawback in her estimation; she could not reconcile herself to the idea of marrying a man who, as she expressed it, "was so deficient in those little links which make up the chain of a woman's happiness." He was anxious to have her for a wife, but he did not hide from her the fact that he was poor, and likely to remain so. "Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine," he frankly wrote her, "should any one ever do so, it is my intention to do everything in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing that I can imagine that would make me more unhappy than to fail in the effort." He asked her to think seriously before declining, and to give her consent if she felt willing to take the risk and incur the hardship which it involved. "My opinion is you had better not do it," he added, more like a lawyer than like a lover.

Miss Owens seems to have been somewhat coquettish, and disposed to prolong the courtship for vanity's sake. He continued to visit her and to write to her, but was unable to get a definite answer from her. "I want in all cases to do right," he said in one of his letters to her, "and most particularly so in all cases with women. I want, at this particular time, more than anything else, to do right with you; and if I knew it would be doing right, as I rather suspect it would, to let you alone, I would do it." He was only seeking, he continued, to ascertain her wishes, and he would abide by them; the matter of their further acquaintance was entirely in her hands. "If it suits you best not to answer this," he concluded, "farewell—a long life and a merry one attend you. But if you conclude to write back, speak as plainly as I do. There can be no harm or danger in saying to me anything you think, just in the manner you

is evident that Lincoln respected and admired this handsome daughter of Kentucky, but he did not love her in any valid and passionate sense. Her refusal to be his wife piqued him, but it did not agonize him. He was able to contemplate it philosophically, much as he might have regarded an ordinary professional or political disappointment. "Others have been made fools of by the girls," he wrote to a friend, "but this can never with truth be said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance, made a fool of myself." That was the talk of a man whose vanity had been wounded, and not of one whose heart had been lacerated. "I have now come to the conclusion," he added, "never again to think of marrying, and for this reason: I can never be satisfied with any one who would be blockhead enough to leave me." He was more interested now in law and politics than in the witchcraft of blue eyes and pink lips. His service in the Legislature had given him a taste of public life, and he liked it, and began to feel the throbbings of ambition for higher honors. He removed to Springfield, his personal effects consisting of a pair of saddle-bags, two or three law books, and a

few pieces of clothing. The State capital had just been located there, and the town was assuming airs of social importance. Most of the leading families were from Kentucky, and had certain aristocratic proclivities which were discouraging to a young man of humble birth and ragged fortune; but Lincoln succeeded, nevertheless, in winning their recognition and esteem. They found it hard to be patient with his want of culture, but they were attracted by his intelligence and manliness, and in a short time their doors were all opened to him.

The social gossip that has come down to us from those days may be said to prove that Lincoln's fancy turned lightly from one pretty face to another. His love episodes were frequent, but not serious, partaking of the nature of comedies with a mere moisture of emotion, instead of being permeated with the spirit of tragedy. And yet there is no evidence that he wantonly trifled with any of the young women to whom he gave his preference from time to time. He wrote sentimental verses, it is true, which is a sign of inherent sham, the experts assure us; and what was much worse, he foolishly published them. But, on the other hand, he was quick to defend a lady's good name, and once accepted a challenge to fight a duel rather than betray a giddy girl's responsibility for some offensive rhymes about a rival suitor. The truth is, most likely, that he paid homage to woman in the abstract, and the gracious objects of his admiration forgave his fluctuating judgments concerning them as individuals on the theory that his very uncertainty was a compliment to them as a class. Women know men better than men know themselves. Those who set their caps for Lincoln, and hail him for a lover by turns; did not dream, perhaps, that he would ever be President; but they saw more of the simplicity and nobility that finally made him great and precious than was seen by the men who were constantly and intimately associated with him.

It may have been inevitable—surely it was very sorrowful—that such a man should at last make an unlucky selection of a wife. When he first saw Mary Todd she was a handsome and vivacious young woman of 21, a shrewd observer and a piquant critic, ordinarily charming, but always at the mercy of a violent temper, which easily mastered her better qualities. He was somehow irresistibly drawn to her, and she encouraged him until the point of engagement was reached. Then she began to show favor to Stephen A. Douglas, and her flirtation went so far that Lincoln resolved to write her a letter, telling her that he had concluded that he did not love her sufficiently to warrant him in marrying her. But instead of sending the letter, he went, on the advice of a friend, to say to her what he had put in writing. When he declared to her that he did not love her, she burst into tears and piteously wrung her hands. "It was too much for me," he said, in reporting the interview to his friend; "I found the tears trickling down my own cheeks, and I caught her in my arms and kissed her." His friend sauered at him for his folly, and said that he was now in decency bound to fulfill the contract. "Well," he slowly answered, "if I'm in again, so be it; it's done, and I shall abide by it."

The time for the marriage was fixed, the day came, the guests were assembled, the bride was dressed and waiting; but no bridegroom appeared. An hour passed, messengers were sent out, and still Lincoln did not come. At last it became evident that he had purposely remained away. The company dispersed, the wedding feast was left untouched, the bride was overwhelmed with grief and shame. When Lincoln's friends found him, at daybreak, he was in a desperate state. He had no excuse to offer for his singular conduct except that at the final moment he could not make up his mind to marry a woman whom he did not love as



a man should love a wife. But he had violated his honor in the matter, and that was utter misery. He talked of suicide, and acted like an insane man. It was a repetition, from another cause, of what had occurred to him when Ann Rutledge died. He recovered after a while, but he could not get rid of the feeling of guilt and disgrace. His intention had been to do the right thing, but he realized that in failing to keep his word he had done a monstrous wrong. He made no explanation to Miss Todd, nor did she ask for any. The harm was done, and by mutual consent they became strangers to each other. "If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family," he wrote to his partner, "there would not be one cheerful face on the earth;" and what the woman must have suffered only women are capable of comprehending.

This would have been the last of the matter but for the intervention of another woman, Mrs. Francis, who was a warm friend of Mary Todd, and whose husband was likewise attached to Lincoln. Through her diplomacy the estranged pair came together again, much to their surprise, and a reconciliation was speedily effected. They had frequent private meetings in Mrs. Francis' parlor, and at length a second day was appointed for the wedding. This time there was to be no failure. It was Lincoln's opportunity to save his honor, and he improved it, not from choice, but from moral necessity. The woman so interpreted his action, undoubtedly, and she was willing to take him on such terms, not because she loved him, but because that was her only way to remove the humiliation which he had previously put upon her. Their exchange of vows was a mockery. The scene had in it no element of marriage except the formality which united their hands when their hearts were divided. As Lincoln was dressing for the ceremony a friend's little boy innocently asked him where he was going. "To hell, I suppose," was his grim reply. And when he stood before the minister to register the oath that his sense of duty demanded, we are told by an eyewitness, "he was as pale and trembling as if being driven to slaughter."

The result of this wedding was lifelong bitterness, as might have been anticipated. It may be said without disrespect that Mary Todd was not the kind of woman that Abraham Lincoln should have married. The mistake was a hideous one for both of them. They lived unhappily from first to last, and there was no help for it. There is nothing more pathetic in all history than the fact that the man dearest to the hearts of his countrymen for his superior goodness never had a home. His domestic life was empty of all that would have made it happy and inspiring. And yet how beautiful was his patient fidelity to the woman whom he had wedded so unwisely, and how bravely he endured a cross that must often have wearied his great soul to the point of despair! There is something to be said for the woman, too. She was not more responsible than he was for the terrible blunder of their marriage; nor was all the blame hers for the infelicity that they had to bear. With another man she might have been a different woman. They were uncongenial in all essential respects; and they were therefore fated to miss the joys that come only to those who are harmoniously mated, and who have the love that is but another name for immortal hilarity.

# ONLY GIRL WITH WHOM LINCOLN EVER DANCED A RESIDENT OF OSKALOOSA.

It was something of a coincidence that I should hear of the woman who danced with Lincoln exactly one year to a day before I ever saw her. It came about this way: On February 11, 1907, I received a letter from my cousin and former schoolmate back in Iowa. Along with the news of home, the who's who of the local matrimonial market and the like, he included the following paragraph:

"By the way, there is an old lady near here, Mrs. Tom Wheatcroft by name, who told mother recently that she had known Thaddeus Stevens and President Buchanan, had taken tea with Harriet Lane and danced with Abraham Lincoln. She is reported as saying, too, that honest Abe walked on her skirt until he tore nearly the whole train off. Lincoln, as a ball room butterfly is a kind of a new one on me."

I immediately wrote him an appeal for further particulars. Three months later he wrote me a long reply in which he conscientiously covered every possible item of local interest, excepting only these same required particulars. In the fall he did mention, in evident response to my mild upbraidings, that "the old lady in question" had "gone away somewhere on a visit." After that I completely forgot her.

Last February I boarded a Jersey bound boat and started upon a westward journey whose ultimate destination was a cattle ranch in New Mexico. On the way I stopped off to visit my parents in Iowa. It was along about the 5th or 6th of the month and in that American household they were patiently training a 10-year-old patriot in the recitation of his Lincoln's birthday "speech." Like an inspiration something came back to me. *OSKALOOSA IOWA "GLOBE"*

"Say!" I broke in abruptly, "do you people know Mrs. Tom Wheatcroft, the woman who danced with Lincoln?"

"I know Mrs. Wheatcroft quite well," my mother answered calmly enough. She's a member of our ladies' aid, and a very lovely old lady. But I didn't know," and mother smiled, "that Mrs. Wheatcroft ever danced with anybody."

Now the glorious liberality with which Iowa gave of her pioneer sons to the cause of the Union is a matter of history. "Old Mahaska county" sent an almost unbelievably large percentage of her population to the front between 1861 and 1865. Nowhere in the country are war traditions more alive than in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

## McNeil Knew Lincoln.

One prominent citizen of the town, Col. J. F. McNeil, was a neighbor to Lincoln in Springfield, and later one of the picked officers who so long and lovingly guarded the tomb of the mar-

tyr against ghoul and vandal. Everybody knows Colonel McNeil and Colonel McNeil's story; the latter was long ago added to the literature of Lincoln's life. Most of the people in Oskaloosa know Tom Wheatcroft, who has long been a prosperous dairyman in the community. Many know his wife. But I doubt if a bare half dozen in all know this retiring old lady's interesting history.

On the morning of the eleventh my mother and I took a short drive out east of town. Everywhere the grass lay dry and brown on the hard ground. The awkward limbs of the maples along the roads were naked and gray. No vestige remained of the January snows. But in the profundity above which gave the lie to winter; the skies of Italian summer could never have been bluer, clearer. In half an hour we came upon Tom Wheatcroft's

home, a neat, white house of the cottage type, set well back in a big lawn.

A sweet-faced little woman with out-stretched arms greeted my mother at the door. She led us into a sunlit room fragrant with geraniums. There followed an introduction. We drew our chairs up to a small open fireplace in which two or three logs were kindling cheerily. I looked at Mrs. Wheatcroft and was frankly puzzled. In this woman's face with its young eyes and its color, in her carriage, in her pleasant and even voice as she chatted with my mother were none of the aspects of age which I had expected to encounter in the woman who had been neighbor to Buchanan, and who had danced with Abraham Lincoln.

I contrived to interpolate my mission into the general conversation. "Do you want to ask me questions?" she asked. I told her I much preferred to listen. "If Lincoln ever did dance," I was thinking to myself, "it must have been along in the 30's before this woman was born."

## Lincoln Tried to Dance.

"The little I have to tell may disappoint you," Mrs. Wheatcroft was saying. "I saw President Lincoln only four times. But," and she paused, possibly amused at my look of gratification, "Mr. Lincoln, himself, told me I was the only girl he ever tried to dance with on a ball room floor."

My mother and I sat and heard Mrs. Wheatcroft talk quietly and familiarly for an hour of this quaint and unfamiliar incident in the life of Lincoln. I know I kept wondering to myself how the narrator had ever managed to elude Miss Tarbell and the host who have so perseveringly ransacked the homely life of the most majestic and most solemnly pathetic character in history. Suddenly I knew and understood what must have been the feelings of the interviewer when he clasped the living hand of the old chap who had surprised the wary opponent of Douglas at a foot-

to tell me something of herself. I learned that her maiden name was an Virginia Massey. She was born in Philadelphia of old Quaker stock. Her father, she told me with a touch of pride in her voice, was one of the donors of the land where the West Town school now stands.

"I was fourteen years old when he moved to Lancaster. There my father became acquainted with Thaddeus Stevens and Mr. Buchanan, and I remember both well. I can almost see 'Wheatland' with its big house and the swan ponds. Mother and I took tea once at the White House with President Buchanan and his niece, Harriet Lane."

"You see I don't have to be so very ancient to have done that," she added looking from me to my mother and smiling.

"But I'm not telling you anything about President Lincoln," she went on half apologetically.

## She Was Girl of 20.

"The 9th of August, 1864, was the greatest day in the history of Lancaster. Let me see," counting on her fingers. "Aug. 9 to Jan. 1, 1865, and from then to April 14—that makes it about eight months before the president was assassinated. We were holding a great holiday in honor of the Fencible military band. They were just back from the front, and people were wild about them. I have often heard it said that the Fencible band was the best in the army. The big feature of the celebration was to be the military ball at old Fulton hall. The president and two of his cabinet had promised to be there. I remember how nervous people were about Gen. Grant and the army, and how everybody kept saying that the president couldn't possibly come. He did come though, and if ever a town went mad it was Lancaster. The guns boomed so loud that I remember it gave me an awful headache. Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln put up at the Cadwell house and the hotel and that whole street was a blaze of flags and bunting. My father remarked what an awful thing it would be if the decorations should catch fire.

"I was a girl of 20 at the time. This ball was to be the great event of my life. Mother had always objected pretty seriously to my dancing, but I can never forget the way she softened when father told her it 'wouldn't do at all' for me 'to miss this chance to meet the president.' I had never seen father so pleased over anything. He was a splendid dancer himself if he was a Quaker.

"Old Fulton hall had served as a regimental barracks ever since the beginning of the war. We danced on the second floor. It was an immense room, and what a mass of color it was. The Fencible band played at one end on a special platform. They were almost hidden from sight by banks of flowers and flags. Ugly bayonet points were sticking everywhere out of the decorations. Right in



front of the stand were several stacks of guns and three or four cannon.

"The first number on the program was the 'Lincoln grand march.' I think it was written for the occasion. My partner was Mr. T. Hall Foreman.

First came the president with his wife, then the cabinet members and their wives and then Mr. Foreman and myself. I was the proudest girl in the United States or the confederate states, for that matter." The old lady paused and blushed with the pretty pleasure of a girl.

"All the men in the room," she went on, "excepting the president and the two cabinet officers were in full military uniform, Mr. Lincoln towered away above his wife. I believe he was the tallest man there. I can never forget how pale he was, and how tired he looked about the eyes. The skin of his face was all loose and wrinkled, but his smile was like a father's. I remember I thought afterwards he was the homeliest man on the floor. But," she mused, "that was not till afterwards.

"Mrs. Lincoln was a rather short and fleshy woman. She had an agreeable face, and I liked her. She wore a fawn-colored silk, cut full the way they wore them then, and trimmed with lovely lace. I remember thinking how much better her clothes fitted her than Mr. Lincoln's fitted him. She had a bunch of lillies of the valley in her hair.

"When the band struck up the march it seemed to me that Mr. Lincoln kept trying to shorten his steps so that Mrs. Lincoln could keep up with him. In this way they led slowly around the room. The music was delightful for dancing." Was there a little mischief in the old lady's smile?

"I never saw such a scene," she continued, "as that line, with the officers in their blue and gold, and all the women in their pretty gowns. I wanted that march to last forever. At last we came back to the president's box of honor, and the band struck up a polka. I know Mr. Lincoln wasn't ready for what happened next, for when we began to separate into sets he stopped and watched everybody like he was bewildered. I think he was going to leave the floor, but Mrs. Lincoln whispered something to him and he smiled as though he had been suddenly struck with an amusing idea. I could see that some of the floor managers were dreadfully embarrassed, but there was nothing else for it; the sets were already in motion, the figures forming. Of course, being the fourth lady in line, I was thrown in with Mr. Lincoln right while he stood there. Things were getting a little bit involved, I'll tell you. I felt awful and didn't know what to do.

"The poor man watched the others with a half smile and followed me the best he could. He was walking flatfooted and taking funny, cautious steps. Once he stood still and looked over at his wife. She turned her

head and smiled at him in a very sympathetic way. I do think that the president was the least embarrassed of all of us until he stepped on my skirt." Mrs. Wheatcroft laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"We had just come to the whirl, and Mr. Lincoln seemed to be catching the idea. At least, I have always thought he was going to make a try at it, for he came quite close and reached out his arm. In the turn he stepped full on my train. It was a white mul, full and wide, and he gave it a tremendous wrench. I stood stock still, but before he got off he'd managed to walk right up my skirt, and to rip the whole gown loose at the waist. I was not the least bit angry with him; I think I felt proud, if anything, of the accident. But from the look on the president's face you would have thought he believed himself guilty of something terrible. I was laughing about it. He said something about his 'inborn awkwardness' and began to apologize. Mrs. Lincoln came over and tried to pin me up, but I thanked her and slipped out to the dressing rooms. I beckoned to Miss Cadwell to take my place. Miss Cadwell was the daughter of the landlord of the Cadwell house.

"The ducky girls soon fixed me up. I remember one of them, a very black woman with her mouth full of pins. When I told her how it happened she let her pins all fly at once and kissed the torn cloth over and over again. 'Marse Linkum done it,' she said. 'Marse Linkum done it.'

"When I went down again President Lincoln stood talking with Miss Cadwell just where I had left her. Miss Cadwell smoothed the wrinkles out of my sash and excused herself. Mr. Lincoln said to me in his joking way: 'You're going to try me again, are you?' I told him no serious harm had been done. He said something about his 'reputation for awkwardness' being 'already established, anyway.'

"The rest of the dance he merely walked about; and he was very gingerly about it too. It was amusing to see the girls drawing their gowns out

of his way, and trying to look entirely unconcerned. I think every one of them envied me my experience. When the intermission came the president left Mrs. Lincoln in their box and walked over to the band platform. He talked to the leader for some time. I danced the lancers with the dancing master, Professor Kerren.

"When the music stopped Mrs. Lincoln smiled to me, and I went over and sat beside her. She took my hand in a motherly sort of a way and told me she was 'so sorry' about my gown. The president leaned over and said: 'Miss Massey, that is the only time I ever tried to dance on a ball room floor.' Then he laughed and told a little group of us a story on himself. I can remember almost exactly how he told it.

"'Back in Indiana,' he said, 'they made up a little dance after one of our spelling bees. I didn't know much about dancing; most of the boys did not. But there was one pretty girl there who had almost spelled me down. I admired her so much I could not keep away from her. Finally I mustered up a little courage and went over and told her I would like to dance with her the 'worst kind.' Afterward this girl went around telling that Abe Lincoln had danced with her the 'very worst kind.'

"Father and I went to the Cadwell house the next morning," she continued. "The lobby and halls were crowded with people. I wrote my name on a card and asked one of the officers of Colonel Hambricht's regiment to get it to the president for me. A hotel servant took us up stairs by a back way, and we were soon in the receiving room.

"There stood the president, and his wife shaking hands with hundreds of visitors. Mr. Lincoln smiled all over his tired face when he saw me. He referred at once to what he called 'our accident,' and he and father talked for at least two or three minutes. He laughed about his dancing and told father it was 'hard for an old dog to learn new tricks.' When we were home father said to mother and me: 'I don't wonder that the soldiers all call him Father Abraham.'

"A few weeks later—I only wish," said Mrs. Wheatcroft, "that I could remember the date—I was visiting a girl friend in Harrisburg. One morning we were walking near the capitol. President Lincoln was standing with a group of men at the edge of the walk. He stood head and shoulders over the most of them and his tall hat made him seem taller than he really was. We walked quite close to him. I'm sure I must have hesitated. He looked me squarely in the face for a moment and then his eyes began to twinkle. He took a long step forward and shook hands with both of us. My friend was a very pretty girl, and Mr. Lincoln smiled kindly at her. I remember the way she blushed.

"'Do you live in Lancaster, too?' he asked her.

"A carriage drove up for him just then, and he tipped his hat to us and got in beside a soldier. We watched him drive away. He set his hat on his knee and let his head droop to his chest. We were too pleased to think of it at the time, but afterward we talked a great deal about the worry in his face and how sad he looked the minute before he spoke to us and the minute after he left us. I think he was grieving about the men who were being killed around Richmond." Mrs. Wheatcroft stopped as though her narrative were over, and began petting a cat which had jumped up into her lap.

"Pardon me," I said, the reporter's instinct for inquisition crowding into my mind and attacking my tongue. "You saw Lincoln a fourth time, did you not?" A look of instant pain came into her eyes.

"Yes," she resumed sadly, "I did see him once after that—it was at Harri-burg. Father and mother and I saw him in his casket. The funeral train which was taking him to Springfield stopped at all the state capitals on the route. The whole train was black with crepe, and an extra engine went along ahead to keep the track clear. The relatives and the great men of the country rode in two black coaches, one just ahead of the funeral car, one just behind it. Thousands saw him and almost all, men, women and children, were crying. I remember as we passed the casket mother held tightly to my arm and looked into his face.

"How I wish I had gone to the Cadwell house with you and seen him living," she sobbed.

"Was his face still troubled, Mrs. Wheatcroft?" It was my mother who spoke, and she asked, oh, so gently, the question which it was on my tongue to ask.

"It seemed to me," answered Mrs. Wheatcroft softly, "that his face looked less troubled and hardly any paler than in life. It was as though, with the war over, nothing any longer made any difference to him."

Harold M. Finley.



### Lincoln's Love Affairs.

Press dispatches last week related that "Illinois' most bashful man" had a fourth time failed to appear at the altar at the time set for his marriage. Persons reading the dispatch smiled, —no doubt, at the timidity of the prospective groom, who nevertheless may point distinguished precedents for his course.

The first woman Abraham Lincoln loved was Ann Rutledge, whose unfortunate affair with John McNeill preceded her promise to marry the young student then boarding with her family. But Ann repented of having judged her departed fiancé unjustly, she could not forget her love for McNeill and becoming ill from worry she died. Ann Rutledge's death caused Lincoln to "seem desolate and sorely distressed." In later life, the poignant grief of her death long since become a memory, Lincoln said to an inquiring friend, "I really and truly loved the girl and think often of her now." After a pause, he added, "And I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day."

So far in Lincoln's life there is no conduct parallel with that of the "most bashful man." But the parallels begin in the affair with Mary Owens, who had assented to his proposal of marriage preceding his departure for Springfield, where he began the study of law. Cast in new environment, Lincoln soon discovered that his affection for Mary Owens did not take on the dignity of marriage love, but he felt himself bound in honor to marry her if she persisted in the desire. However, he wrote her, indicating his desire to be free from the engagement, while pointing out to her objections to their marriage. "I am afraid you would not be satisfied," he wrote the young woman. "There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would be your doom to see without sharing it. You would have to be poor, without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently?" "Although he put the question of poverty so plainly," says Historian Tarbell, "he assured Miss Owens that if she married him he would do all in his power to make her happy." Miss Owens' discernment revealed to her the disinterestedness of Lincoln's love-making, and she broke off the engagement.

Some time in 1840 Mary Todd, frowning upon objections to marriage with Lincoln, and preferring him to the distinguished Douglas, Shields and others, promised to marry him. Miss Todd was a brilliant, passionate creature and her

love took away Lincoln's courage. His was a reflective nature, founded in melancholy, and obscured with the possible delusion that he would be unable to make her happy, and "staggering under a burden of uncertainty and suffering, finally broke the engagement." But he did not reach his decision until the wedding party had assembled in Miss Todd's home, where Lincoln left them waiting, and failed to appear.

Two years later, Lincoln and Mary Todd were married. Friends who knew the love of each for the other had by a clever ruse thrown them together with the result that they harmonized their past differences, Miss Todd for-

giving Lincoln. But warned by her previous experience she did not proclaim the affair in advance of its occurrence.



# The Definition of the MIDDLE WEST

By VACHEL LINDSAY

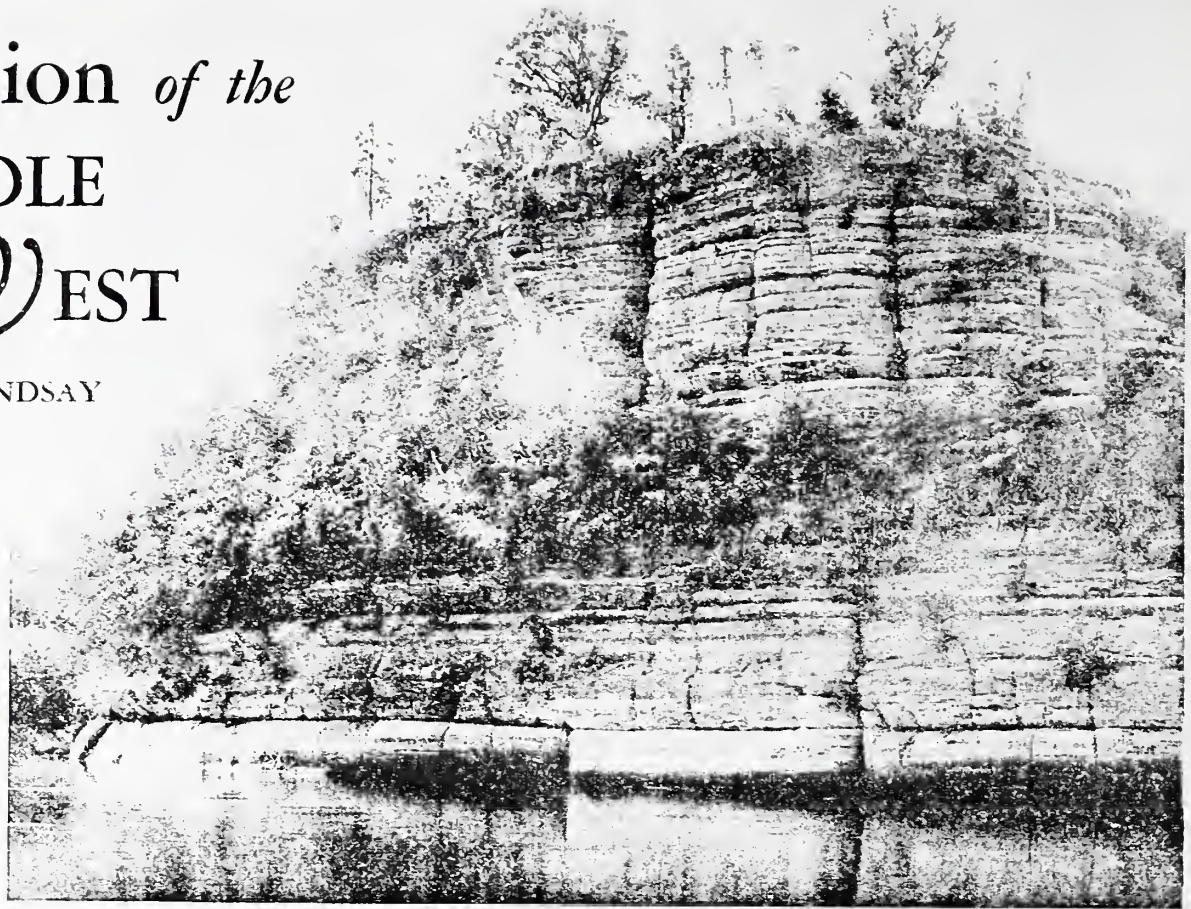
SEVERAL doors to the south on Fifth Street in Springfield, near my home, all my life I walked by a rather unpretentious house. It was a two-story frame dwelling, looking about fifty years old, with a little porch, a tree or two, a small lawn, and a very small flower garden. All the dark cynics about the Middle

West might easily say that in such houses was brewed its present heaviness, its complete lack of appeal to their imagination.

Springfield had a population of sixty thousand, and in any town of sixty thousand in the Middle West, two-thirds of the houses looked like that about fifty years ago. It was inhabited by the sort of quiet neighbors you never hear from; and no man knows how many quiet families have come and gone throughout its history.

At last someone bought that corner for a three-story brick residence, of some pretensions, and wreckers began to rip away the white clapboards and scrape off the shingles. Then the building became Springfield's wonder for a day.

It was actually a log cabin of the very earliest times, and a two-story log cabin at that. It had been inclosed in sawed boards and fitted with plaster and wall paper, and all modern conveniences; and the logs, almost a foot thick, had been long forgotten; the floors beneath the floors made of hewn logs had been a buried mystery; and the plastered-up fireplace had been a center of incantation long lost. Now all was open. The magnificent walnut logs were there for all to see; and the memory of Sangamon County, when it was the rail splitter's Far West, and not a mere Middle West, was before us. Though the wreckers had torn



'Stratified Rock' with its interesting geological formations, near LaSalle, Illinois.

—Living Gallows, P. M.

down this log cabin in a week, and though the new brick residence is on the corner now, that log cabin is eternal, and a symbol of all we desire in America.

I have dreamed of the fire I built on the bluff by the Sangamon River in my youth and of this log cabin. Let us tell a story which is read to us by that Ancient Mariner, on the edge of the prairie sea, that Ancient Mariner whose name is Springfield.

He says, 'I came to that corner one evening and found the log cabin there, complete in its ancient state, lighted by candles, and with the hearth fire burning. There were three women by the fire. These women were spinning. They were from *That Undiscovered Country*. They were from the Land of the Grave, which is eternal. They were three young fates.

'There were others in the room, western boys and men of the old time, about their evening affairs, reading, smoking, talking, their hunting shirts hanging on the wall along with old rifles and skins of animals. But the greatest thing about this log cabin was the hearth fire itself, leaping up the chimney, sending up into the air and over the village crystalline flying books, with wings and leaves of gold, books which are some day to come in visions to all the citizens of Springfield, telling to each man a separate and beautiful story of his future.

'Who are these three women by the fire? Surely two of them have nothing to do with the log cabin fancies of old Springfield. One of them is a woman who died ages ago in a dream of William Shakespeare. She is in the costume of Verona, and her name is Juliet. The other is the woman who dominated the greatest moment of France, in its grimmest chronicle. She is a woman who died for France. She sits here in honor before this fire, one of the three fates of this dream, and her name is Joan of Arc.

It is easy to tell who Juliet is, who Joan of Arc is; the world has been told for generations; and the very sounding of their names is the echo of their story. There is the great official trial and retrial of Joan of Arc, with every inch of her chronicle sworn and certified in open court; and there is the tribute of Thomas De Quincey and the magnificent tribute of Mark Twain. She is a girl whom great men, majestic men, men who have towered above their ages, fall before and reverence. The more mature their judgment and the more distinguished their command over the minds and souls of nations the more apt they are to be set aflame by the saintly fire of Joan of Arc. Juliet, the dream of William Shakespeare, lifted from the dusty chronicle, has become a living word for all time; a young girl of thirteen, but womanhood forever. Joan of Arc died for the love of France;



Juliet for the love of Romeo; and these are two of the young spinners of the thread of fate, by this log cabin hearth fire, in Springfield, Illinois. They are spinning the thread of the fate of a man who will die for the love of a land.

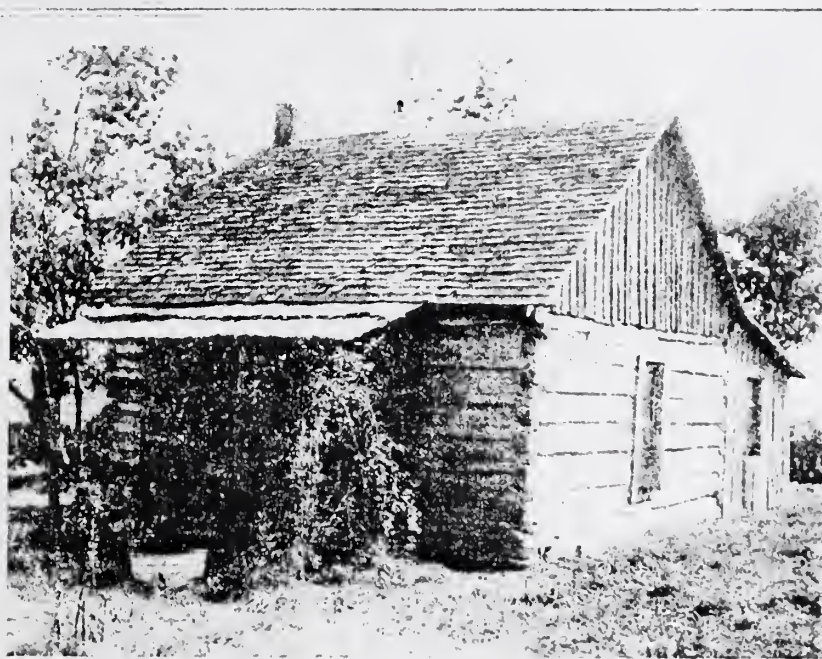
Because of this, so long as they are guests in this mere log cabin, in this middle western town of world pilgrimage, they are handmaidens of the third girl who sits in plain homespun with them, a comrade forever in the glory of her name. Singers and very great singers have already spoken her praise; and her dust still cries from the ground. She is the golden-haired Anne Rutledge; and in perfect innocence she tells her handmaidens that she has just come for a day, from the nearby town of New Salem on the Sangamon, from her father's tavern.

She sings as she spins, an ardent Methodist hymn, very simple and very alien to these Old World maidens whose hearts were given to the High Mass. And then she tells the other two how she has come to Springfield to attend court for a day, and that her young man back in New Salem, keeping store, approves of such amusements and himself reads law by her father's fireplace in New Salem tonight. Springfield is a wild adventure to this little girl. She has come over the very muddiest roads, horseback with her father, through the grimmest, marshiest, chills-and-fever landscape, for the land is still undrained.

dozen sundries and a new law book for her boy, Abraham Lincoln; and with new shoes that she will wear when she walks with him to meeting and by the Sangamon River under the moon. It will be many a day before Abraham Lincoln comes to live at Springfield, old before his time from a broken heart, because of the death of this girl.

But this is a gala day with Anne; and her adventure in the tiny court room, a very gentle piece of litigation indeed over some farmer's boundary line, is to her a wild revel, just because her young man is studying law by the firelight in New Salem tonight.

The others understand. Juliet knows, for have there not been Montague streets and Capulet streets in Verona, and dreadful disputed boundary lines between them? And did not Joan of Arc try to discover what precisely were the boundaries of France, and trace them with the point of her drawn sword? So they understand little golden-haired Anne Rutledge's prattle of the boundary between two Indian-corn farms, settled in a sleepy Springfield law court. She pictures two gesticulating lawyers in butternut shirts and breeches, wearing yarn-knitted suspenders, and taking off their coats as a gesture in the climax. This question of boundaries will again go far. And when Anne Rutledge is in the dust, her young man, now reading by a New Salem firelight, will be



—United States Photo  
Interesting log cabin erected on an Indiana farm about 1861.

There is no such thing as tile in the fields yet.

'Anne Rutledge has had a wonderful day in Springfield, for she has bought calico at the general store, calico of a kind not sold in the log village of New Salem, and she is going back with half a

trying to settle forever the exact meaning of that terrible phrase, Mason and Dixon's line.

The three girl fates spin on and on, by the fire, from which come flying books. Anne Rutledge has made a visit to Springfield.

# Five women in Lincoln's life described by Milo Pearson

By GRACE E. MATTESON

More than 30 members and guests attended the Feb. 12 meeting of Pike County Historical Society at Pittsfield Community Center.

In observance of the birthday anniversary of the martyred President, the evening's speaker, Milo Pearson, chose for his program topic, "The Women in the Life of Abraham Lincoln."

Although much of his story is familiar to most readers of Lincoln lore, these excerpts lay the background for the main topic.

## Excerpts from Narration

Pearson said, "Abraham Lincoln was a man among men in a world of men. All through his life he moved amid men's interests and activities—as a rail splitter in Indiana, as a river pilot and storekeeper in Illinois, as a soldier and surveyor in Menard county, as a lawyer on the old Eighth Circuit, making speeches as a politician, and finally as the head of a nation."

He went on to say that "all through the life of this remarkable man we find...the influence of the women who touched his life...five women who were of much influence in the molding of the character of the immortal Lincoln..."

## His Mother

"First of these, of course, was his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, whose mother, Lucy Hanks, brought her from Virginia to Kentucky when Nancy was only a child. As a young girl Nancy went to live with her Uncle Thomas and Aunt Elizabeth.

"Nancy attended school, became an excellent seamstress, was well respected and worked in many of the frontier homes in Hardin county, Ky. Nancy was of a melancholy nature, looking to the hills in a visionary way. At the age of 22 she married Tom Lincoln, a neighbor boy.

"They went to housekeeping in Elizabethtown, Ky. and here their first child, Sarah, was born. Two years later they moved to Nolin Creek, near Hodgenville, south of Elizabethtown. Here, on Feb. 12, 1809 Abraham Lincoln was born...A few years later the family moved to Knob Creek, then, when Abe was seven years old, they moved to Indiana..."

## Died When Lincoln Was Nine

"His mother sent him several miles through the clearing to a country school...Perhaps Nancy...still had visions that went beyond the clearing, yet she never knew of what lay ahead for that boy of hers, for she was the victim of a strange epidemic that came to Indiana in 1818, and after seven days' illness she died"...leaving Abe motherless at the age of nine.

"In later years," Pearson said, "...Lincoln said he believed that many of his strong mental traits had come from his mother. He recalled that, with all the handicaps, she had good judgment and was cool and heroic always."

Pearson said that he personally believed that when Lincoln said "God bless my mother. All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to her," he included his stepmother, the former Sarah Bush Johnston, the widow whom Tom Lincoln went back to Kentucky to marry so that his two children could have a mother and her three children could have a father.

## His Stepmother

This second woman who came into Lincoln's life when he was 12 years old played an important part in his future life. She encouraged him to read, to learn, and to express himself. She remained close to his heart, as he did to hers, and in later years when he came into prominence he kept her welfare in mind.

Pearson told how the second Mrs Lincoln's own children neglected her; how they would write to him, asking for money which often she never saw, and how one of her sons pestered Abe for money for the support of his mother and proposed that he (the son) take over her farm and put her on an allowance of \$16 a year. Abe's answer was blunt and to the point. He did not consent to this arrangement; instead, he purchased from his parents a quarter section of land in order to provide an income to support them in their old age. He was

afraid his stepbrother might get control of the farm and then mistreat the old folks...Just before leaving for Washington, D.C. as President-elect Abe Lincoln went to see his mother at Charleston, Ill. to tell her goodbye...She outlived Abe, her death occurring in 1869, four years after the President's assassination. To the end she said, "No mother ever had a finer son."

Pearson told about the time when Lincoln was hired to pilot a boat on the Illinois river and when it became lodged on the mill dam at New Salem it took several days to dislodge it, during which time the crew became acquainted with the townspeople.

## Ann Rutledge Legend

After the boat trip was completed, Lincoln returned to New Salem. It was here he met beautiful Ann Rutledge, innkeeper's daughter. Pearson pointed out that the legendary love affair between Lincoln and Ann Rutledge was just that—a legend; but it tells how she fell in love with young Lincoln, and how he was called from Vandalia to the bedside of his dying sweetheart and that he was in deep mental depression which bordered on suicide following her death.

## Mary Owens

Another woman in the life of Lincoln, said Pearson, was Miss Mary Owens of Kentucky whom he met when she was visiting her sister, Mrs Bennett Abel, in New Salem. Lincoln called on her several times. After Miss Owens had returned to her home in Kentucky, Mrs Abel told Lincoln that she would bring her sister back to New Salem if he would ask her to marry him. He agreed. He courted Miss Owens and proposed marriage to her—three times, in fact—but she refused him. She found him deficient in the social graces which seemed so important to her; otherwise, she might have married him.

## Mary Todd

The fifth and final woman who touched and influenced the life of Lincoln was Mary Todd, whom he met in Springfield when she came to visit her aunt, Mrs Ninian Edwards. It is recorded that he courted her for about a year and it was thought that they would be married, but they had a lover's quarrel and the engagement was

broken. Historians, Pearson said, seemed to think the broken engagement was Lincoln's fault and that perhaps he feared that Miss Todd, whose background was so different from his, could not accustom herself to life with a poor young lawyer.

About a year later a friend of Lincoln's brought him and Mary Todd together again, and although Abe still feared marriage, he again proposed. The marriage was arranged on a few hours' notice. It appears that their years of married life in Springfield were happier than those that followed. Here their four sons were born.

## Life in White House

Pearson told about the Lincoln's life in the White House; about Mrs Lincoln's jealousy and fault-finding; her dislike for all of her husband's friends and the members of his cabinet; about the debts (for clothing and entertaining) that she accumulated without her husband's knowledge, and how, following his untimely death, she begged for funds to pay her debts and even auctioned some of her belongings. Instead of returning to Springfield where her real friends were, she went to Chicago where her years after 1865 were filled with misery, pain and insults which, in the end, drove her to a mild insanity.

## White House Hostess

It was said that never since the days of Dolly Madison had there been anyone so well fitted to be the White House hostess as was Mary Todd Lincoln. Her early life in Kentucky had conditioned her to this life. If only she hadn't used such poor judgment in money matters which drove her to the point of insanity. "She turned down the only town that could have helped her," said Pearson.

Summarizing, Pearson said, "In the life of Lincoln...were these women he loved: Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who held him close in her last hours; Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln, who guided him and encouraged him as a youth; Ann Rutledge, who taught him that love could be tragic; Mary Owens, who taught him that love could be a game, and Mary Todd, ambitious, loyal and courageous. These were the women who made his life complete, confused, sometimes sad, often beautiful. These were the women who influenced Lincoln."



## The Women

"Our conversation during the Trip was Mostly concerning family affairs," recalled longtime friend August H. Chapman of Mr. Lincoln's journey to visit his step-mother in late January 1861. Mr. Lincoln said "she had been his best Friend in this world & that no Son could love a Mother more than he loved her."<sup>1</sup> There is little controversy over Mr. Lincoln's love of his mother, but about Mr. Lincoln's friendship for other women there has often been nothing but controversy. "Lincoln was a Man of strong passion for woman," Judge David Davis told William Herndon. Mr. Lincoln's conscience kept "him from seduction - this saved many - many a woman." Most contemporary and scholarly opinions differs with the Judge.

"The consensus of Lincoln's relatives and neighbors in Indiana, where he lived from ages seven to twenty-one, was that he was not much attracted to girls," wrote historian Douglas Wilson in *Honor's Voice*. 'This was pretty much the reputation reported from his first years at New Salem, where he went to live when he was twenty-two."<sup>2</sup> According to Wilson, "Married women might provide Lincoln with congenial company outside the arena of courtship, but it was not without consequences." Friends, such as Jack Armstrong, jested with Mr. Lincoln that he was having affairs with their wives.<sup>3</sup>

"Abraham Lincoln did not like women," maintained psycho-biographer Michael Burlingame. 'His stepmother, with whom he lived from his eleventh to his twenty-third year, recalled that he 'was not very fond of girls,' a conclusion supported by his stepbrother, who said that he 'didn't take much truck with the girls' because 'he was too busy studying.' One schoolmate with whom he studied during his Indiana years, Anna C. Roby, testified from firsthand experience that Lincoln 'didn't like girls much' and 'did not go much with the girls' because he thought them 'too frivolous.' Lincoln's cousin Sophie Hanks, who lived with the Lincolns for several years during his youth, told her son that young Abraham 'didn't like the girls['] company.' Another of Lincoln's cousins, John Hanks, who also stayed with the Lincoln family for many years, recalled that 'I never could get him in company with women; he was not a timid man in this particular, but he did not seek such company."<sup>4</sup> But New Salem colleague J. Rowan Herndon suggested that the village's women all liked Mr. Lincoln and he liked them.<sup>5</sup> Burlingame wrote that Mr. Lincoln's "attitude toward women in general was puzzling, especially his passivity in his dealings with them."<sup>6</sup>

Historian David Herbert Donald observed that Mr. Lincoln "was extremely awkward around women. With the wives of old friends, like Mrs. Hannah Armstrong, he could be courtly, even affectionate, but he froze in the presence of eligible girls. At his store he had been reluctant to wait on them, and at Rutledge Tavern he was unwilling to sit at the table when a well-dressed Virginia woman and her three daughters were guests. Efforts of



Mrs. Elizabeth  
Abell



Hannah  
Armstrong



Mrs. Eliza  
Caldwell  
Browning



Eliza Rumsey  
Francis



Anne Rutledge

New Salem matrons to match him with a Miss Short and a Miss Berry failed completely."<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Todd Edwards, who knew Mr. Lincoln before he married her sister Mary, said that Mr. Lincoln could "not hold a lengthy Conversation with a lady - was not sufficiently Educated & intelligent in the female line to do so - He was charmed with Mary's wit and fascinated with her quick sagacity - her will - her nature - and Culture."<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Lincoln appeared more comfortable in the social company of men. "When in company with Men & Women he was rather backward but with the Boys, he was always cheerful and talkative. He did not Seem to seek the Company of the girls and [when about] them was rather backward," said an Indiana friend.<sup>9</sup> Mr. Lincoln "always like lively, jovial company, where there was plenty of fun & no drunkenness, and would just as lieve the company were all men as to have it a mixture of the sexes," recalled New Salem's James Short.<sup>10</sup>

Historian Michael Burlingame wrote: "As a young legislator, he was, a colleague recalled, 'very awkward, and very much embarrassed in the presence of ladies.' A New Salem woman remembered that 'Lincoln was not much of a beau and seemed to prefer the company of the elderly ladies to the young ones.' Those more mature women included Hannah Armstrong, Nancy Greene, and Mrs. Bennett Abell, who were in effect surrogate mothers."<sup>11</sup>

Even as a lawyer travelling along the Eighth Circuit, Mr. Lincoln could be awkward. Elizabeth Allen Bradner wrote that Mr. Lincoln was popular with women in Bloomington, but that in "another town on the circuit the old lady who kept the tavern always made a large bowl of custard for the middle of the table when the lawyers were her guests. Coming to the table on one of their visits Mr. Lincoln asked with a smile: "Davis, did you ever see anything keep like that? It looked just like that when we left last fall?" Mr. Lincoln's joke offended the old lady, and she made no more custard for the lawyers."<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Lincoln admitted his social deficiencies. "The truth is I have never corresponded much with ladies; and hence I postpone writing letters to them, as a business which I do not understand," he wrote Mrs. M. J. Green on September 22, 1860.<sup>13</sup> Mr. Lincoln never "addressed another woman in my opinion, 'yours affectionately,' and generally and characteristically abstained from the use of the word 'love,'" William Herndon contended in his controversial speech on Mr. Lincoln's relationship with Anne Rutledge in November 1866. "The word cannot be found more than half a dozen times, if that often, in all his letters and speeches, since that time. I have seen some of his letters to other ladies, but he never says 'love.' He never ended his letters with 'yours affectionately' but signed his name, 'your friend, A. Lincoln."<sup>14</sup> And to one woman in Centralia, Mr. Lincoln said: "Howdo! Howdo! I don't know how to talk to ladies."<sup>15</sup>

"Political culture in Lincoln's Illinois was a man's world, and it was the world in which he operated continually," wrote historian Robert McColley. "Lincoln learned quickly enough how to act in situations where he wished to act. The expanding but politically secondary world of upper-class women was of relatively little interest to him. He knew little of fashion, he declined to read novels, and more urgent affairs constantly claimed his attention."<sup>16</sup>

But Mr. Lincoln's story-telling appealed to male clients. Friend Abner Y. Ellis wrote that Mr. Lincoln himself discovered that "refined Ladies Could Never See Much of his humor."<sup>17</sup> Ellis observed him when he kept a store in New Salem in the early 1830s that Mr. Lincoln "disliked to wait on the Ladies." Ellis observed that Mr. Lincoln was very shy around ladies and with a Virginia woman and her three stylish daughter stayed in New Salem for several weeks, Mr. Lincoln never ate at the same table.<sup>18</sup> Still, wrote Ellis, he never saw Mr. Lincoln speak with disrespect about a woman.

"As a society man Abe was 'singularly deficient' while living in New Salem but he bore himself with a gentleman's gallantry," wrote psychobiographer Edward J. Kempf. "He never gossiped about ladies or



circulated village scandal."<sup>19</sup> Mr. Lincoln's behavior with women in New Salem was shy but correct. Historian William Lee Miller wrote: "Usually articulate, he had trouble talking in the company of eligible women, and made rather a point of becoming friends, as he moved out on his own in New Salem, with older married women - a domain of safety."<sup>20</sup> Mr. Lincoln "never indulged in gossip about the ladies, nor aided in the circulation of village scandal. For women he had a high regard, and I can testify that during my long acquaintance with him his conversation was free from injurious comment in individual cases - freer from unpleasant allusions than that of most men," wrote William H. Herndon, his friend and law partner. "At one time Major [Samuel] Hill charged him with making defamatory remarks regarding his wife. Hill was insulting in his language to Lincoln who never lost his temper. When he saw a chance to edge a word in, Lincoln denied emphatically using the language or anything like that attributed to him. He entertained, he insisted, a high regard for Mrs. Hill, and the only thing he knew to her discredit was the fact that she was Major Hill's wife."<sup>21</sup>

Women were less likely targets for Mr. Lincoln's humor than men - but they were not immune from his humor. Biographer Joseph E. Suppliger wrote: "Lincoln was fully capable of depicting women, or at least some of them, as ridiculous creatures. One day when the streets of Springfield were even more a muddy hog-wallow than usual, Lincoln and a friend amused themselves by watching a woman with flowing skirts and a fancy, plumed hat trying to make her way across the avenue by Hoffman's Row. After initial success, she slipped and fell backward in the mire. At this point Lincoln quipped, 'Reminds me of a duck.' His companion, playing the straightman, inquired 'How is that?' Lincoln replied: 'Feathers on her head and down on her behind.'"<sup>22</sup>

Mr. Lincoln could be charming - especially as President. Actress Charlotte Cushman met with President Lincoln in 1861. At the suggestion of Secretary of State William H. Seward, she was make a request for a West Point appointment. She subsequently wrote Seward: "You advised my asking the President when, if I found him in a 'pliant hour' you would take care to keep the young man in your mind. When you did me the honor to present me, I was so completely taken up with him & his humor that I forgot my mission & came away."<sup>23</sup>

However, Mr. Lincoln also had a keen sense of his own ridiculousness in his relations with the opposite gender. After his aborted courtship with Mary Owens in the mid-1830s, Mr. Lincoln wrote: "Others have been made fools of by the girls, but this can never with truth be said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance made a fool of myself."<sup>24</sup>

But Mr. Lincoln's kindness toward women was as notable as his discomfort. Thomas P. Reep wrote: "When he was called upon to survey the original town of Petersburg in February, 1836, he found that Hemima Elmore, the widow of an old friend who had been a member of his company in the Black Hawk War, had bought a little tract of land within the grounds to be surveyed and had built a home where she lived with her children. If the streets of Petersburg were to run straight north and south, a part of her house would be in the street." Mr. Lincoln adjusted the street lines so they would miss the Elmore household.<sup>25</sup>

President Lincoln was a soft touch for women with a genuine case but was a hard case when it came those women who sought to manipulate him. Senator Lot Morrill recalled "that at one time when I went into the room to President Lincoln, there were two women from Baltimore there who had come to try to obtain the release and parole of a prisoner of war who had been captured, and was then confined at Point Lookout. One of them was the mother of the young rebel, and after detailing his alleged sufferings, wound up her sympathetic appeals with the usual finale of such interviews, a copious shower of tears. At this point the president, who had patiently listened to the recital, asked casually when and how the boy had gone into the confederate service? The mother with evident pride, quickly responded with the whole history: he had gone south early in the war, served in such and such campaigns, made such and such marches, and survived such and such battles." At that point the President interjected: "And now that he is

taken prisoner, it is the first time, probably, that you have ever shed tears over what your boy has done?" To the women's silence, he said: "Good morning Madam, I can do nothing for your boy today."<sup>26</sup>

Guard Thomas Pendel recalled: "One day a number of people were shown into the President's office. Finally all left except two tall, gaunt Irish women, who were truly pictures of despair. They went up to Mr. Lincoln and said: 'Howdy, Mishter President. We've cum to see yers, sir; to see if yers wouldn't pardon our husbands out of prison, sir.' This was said in whining, woe-begone voices, and well pretended looks of despair on their faces. 'We would like to have yers pardon 'em out of prison, sir, so as to help support us, sir,' they added, in wailing tones. The President sized them up. He was a greater reader of human nature. Then, in same identical twang the Irish women had used, he said, 'If yers hushbands had not been resisting the draft, they would not now be in prison; so they can stay in prison. The two Irish women, without further words, turned away and left in double quick time.'<sup>27</sup>

Some Irish-American women were more successful. "A young Irishman, who was employed as a fireman on a railroad-train, had been, together with others, engaged in a riot, resulting from the draft; and his mother came to Washington to see Mr. Lincoln in his behalf," reported journalist Lawrence A. Gobright. "She called, and waited at the Executive Mansion during three or four hours, several days in succession. She was successful in procuring an interview. Mr. Lincoln told her to call the next day; when she said that he had lost much time already, and besides, the porter would not let her into his room. 'No difficulty about that,' he replied; and he sat down and wrote a ticket of admission; and giving it to her said, 'Present this at the door to-morrow, and you will be admitted.'

She accordingly called the next day, when Mr. Lincoln, touched by the earnestness and eloquence of the old lady, inquired into all the circumstances attending the imprisonment of her son. He took immediate measures to effect the release - to pardon the rioter, much to the joy, of course, of the parent. And he said to her, if she, on her return home, would prepare the proper papers, he would pardon the other rioters. The woman was absent from Washington several months, and when she made her reappearance, Mr. Lincoln recognized her. The petition being in proper form, accompanied by the facts in the case, Mr. Lincoln extended the Executive clemency to the extent he had promised; and the old lady went away happy, showering blessings upon the head of her distinguished friend.<sup>28</sup>

Attorney General James Speed recalled how a woman came to the White House to see the President in July 1863 shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg. Her husband and her two sons had both joined the army - leaving her without support. She asked that one of her sons be discharged to return home. "I have two, and you have none," muttered the President before he wrote detailed orders for the boy's discharge. Several days later, White House doorman Edward McManus announced: "That woman, Mr. President is here again, and still crying." She tearfully explained that she had followed the President's instructions only to discover that her son had died of wounds suffered in the Battle of Gettysburg. Again, the President muttered: "I have two, and you have none." And again, he wrote orders for the discharge of a soon. "And the woman, as if moved by a filial impulse she could not restrain moved after him and stood by him at the table as he wrote, and with the fond familiarity of a mother placed her hand upon the Presidents head and smoothed down his wandering and tangled hair," reported Speed. "Human grief and human sympathy had overleaped all the barriers of formality, and the ruler of a great nation was truly the servant, friend and protector of the humble woman clothed for the moment with a paramount claim of loyal sacrifice."<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Lincoln could be particularly hard on women of wealth and pretension. Pendel recalled: "One day a paymaster's wife came in, very stylishly dressed, and said, 'Mr. President, I would like my husband to be relieved at the front and some other man sent in his place.' Mr. Lincoln looked up, and said, 'Madam, I



cannot do that. It would necessitate sending another paymaster in his place, so he will have to remain at his post."<sup>30</sup>

Ward Hill Lamon noted that President Lincoln would scold some female visitors: "You would Kill me now if you Could - and still you are asking favors of me." When they got up to leave, crying, he would have second thoughts and give them a pass, adding "Now if you go back South you will do some mischief - You would overturn the Government if you Could."<sup>31</sup> But persistence could pay off. General James B. Fry recalled a letter on which Mr. Lincoln had written: "On this day Mrs. \_\_\_\_ called upon me. She is the wife of Major \_\_\_\_ of the regular army. She wants her husband made a brigadier-general. She is a saucy little woman, and I think she will torment me till I have to do it." Later, the woman's husband received the appointment.<sup>32</sup>

Most women who came into contact with President Lincoln had relatively little acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln. Certainly, he had prominent female visitors - such as Quaker leader Eliza Gurney, black abolitionist Sojourner Truth, and novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe. But most of them came to the White House once or twice and then left. Then might be exposed to Mr. Lincoln's wit - as when he supposedly greeted the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by saying: "So you are the little woman who made this great war."<sup>33</sup> Not all were impressed. Elizabeth Cady Stanton went to the White House with her husband and they "had a long talk with Abraham, he told us some good stories, he impressed me as a stronger & better man than I had from his official acts supposed him to be, but I am not in favor of his reelection."<sup>34</sup>

As President, Mr. Lincoln was isolated from much social interaction with women by the jealousy of his wife. According to Elizabeth Keckley who acted as seamstress and friend to Mrs. Lincoln, "Mrs. Lincoln's love for her husband sometimes prompted her to act very strangely. She was extremely jealous of him, and if a lady desired to court her displeasure, she could select no surer way to do it than to pay marked attention to the President. Those little jealous freaks often were a source of perplexity to Mr. Lincoln."<sup>35</sup>

The jealousy of Mary Todd Lincoln certainly limited the potential of Mr. Lincoln to develop female friendships. There may have been some cause for jealousy as indicated by an incident early in the Civil War. President Lincoln visited the Army of the Potomac on in early April, 1863. On April 7, he visited General Daniel Sickles and the Third Corps. Sickles was apparently struck by the sadness of the Chief Executive and sought a way to lift his gloom. Sickles claimed he asked some women if to "make him more cheerful" they perhaps could "form a line of ladies and each of you give him a kiss."

The only woman willing to plant the first kiss was Princess Salm-Salm, who worried that she was too short to reach the President's face. According to General Sickles, "After I had formed the ladies in line, she went up to him, and sure enough he leaned down a little, and the other ladies followed her example with broad smiles and laughter. After that Lincoln was cheerful." The wife of another General said that the idea for the kiss-attack came from the women themselves: "A glance from the Princess toward the ladies following in her train was all that was necessary. They quickly surrounded Mr. Lincoln, embracing and kissing him with eagerness and fervor, although it was not easy for them to reach up."<sup>36</sup>

"As soon as he could collect himself and recover from his astonishment, the President thanked the lady, but with evident discompsoure; whereupon some of the party made haste to explain that the Princess Salm-Salm had laid a wager with one of the officers that she would kiss the President," reported journalist Noah Brooks.<sup>37</sup> Princess Salm-Salm had married up - having graduated from farm girl to actress to circus-rider to the wife of a European noble. She accompanied her Austrian husband, who served as a Union staff officer.

Mrs. Lincoln was not happy when she was told about the kissathon by her tattle-tale son Tad. She blamed General Sickles, and was very cold when Sickles accompanied the family on a steamer back to

Washington. President Lincoln, however, broke the ice by saying he had heard that Sickles, a notorious philander and admitted murderer, was very 'pious' and 'a great Psalmist. In response to Sickles' denials, President Lincoln said: "Sickles, I have not only heard while in your camp that you are a Psalmist, but I have heard from the best authority that you are a Salm-Salmist."<sup>38</sup>

In the amusement that followed Mrs. Lincoln forgave Sickles. The general subsequently recouped his status with Mrs. Lincoln and became a frequently visitor to the White House while recuperating from the amputation of his leg at the Battle of Gettysburg. Although Mrs. Lincoln strongly objected to any woman giving her attentions to Mr. Lincoln, she herself enjoyed and encouraged the attentions of many men who attended her salon in the White House Red Room.

### Footnotes

1. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 136 (Letter of Augustus H. Chapman to William H. Herndon, October 8, 1865).
2. Douglas L. Wilson, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 109.
3. Douglas L. Wilson, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 111.
4. Michael Burlingame, *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 123.
5. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 69 (Letter from J. Roan Herndon to William H. Herndon, July 3, 1865).
6. Michael Burlingame, *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 314.
7. David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln*, p. 55.
8. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 443 (Interview with Elizabeth Todd Edwards, ca 1865-1866).
9. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 518 (Letter from David Turnham to William H. Herndon, December 17, 1866).
10. Douglas L. Wilson, *Honor's Voice: The Transformation of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 109.
11. Michael Burlingame, *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 124-125.
12. Rufus Rockwell Wilson, editor, *Intimate Memories of Lincoln*, p. 122 (Elizabeth Allen Bradner, *Bloomington Pantagraph*, January 26, 1909).
13. Roy P. Basler, editor, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume IV, p. 118 (Letter to Mrs. M. J. Green, September 22, 1860).
14. Edward J. Kempf, *Abraham Lincoln's Philosophy of Common Sense: An Analytical Biography of a Great Mind*, Volume I, p. 150.
15. Henry C. Whitney, *Life on the Circuit*, p. 37.
16. Robert McColley, "Review Essay", *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Summer 1996, p. 59.
17. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 73 (Letter from Abner Y. Ellis to William Herndon, December 6, 1866).
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20. William Lee Miller, *Lincoln's Virtues*, p. 76.
21. William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Life of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 96.
22. Joseph E. Suppliger, *The Intimate Lincoln*, p. 81.
23. David Chambers Mearns, *Largely Lincoln*, p. 120-121.
24. Roy P. Basler, editor, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume I, p. 117 (Letter to Mrs. Orville H. Browning, April 1, 1838).
25. Thomas P. Reep, *Abraham Lincoln and the Frontier Folk of New Salem*, p. 130.
26. Michael Burlingame, editor, *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln: John G. Nicolay's Interviews and Essays*, p. 55 (Conversation with Lot M. Morrill, undated).



27. Thomas F. Pendel, *Thirty-Six Years in the White House*, p. 17-18.
28. L. A. Gobright, *Recollection of Men and Things at Washington*, p. 331.
29. Michael Burlingame, editor, *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln, John G. Nicolay's Interviews and Essays*, p. 80-82.
30. Thomas F. Pendel, *Thirty-Six Years in the White House*, p. 21.
31. Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editor, *Herndon's Informants*, p. 466 (William H. Herndon interview with Ward Hill Lamon, ca. 1865-1866).
32. Allen Thorndike Rice, editor, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 391 (James B. Fry).
33. Charles Edward Stowe and Lyman Beecher Stowe, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: The Story of Her Life*, p. 202-203.
34. Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, Volume II, p. 261.
35. Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes*, p. 124.
36. David Chambers Mearns, *Largely Lincoln*, p. 108-109.
37. Noah Brooks, *Washington, D.C., in Lincoln's Time*, p. 70.
38. David Chambers Mearns, *Largely Lincoln*, p. 112.

### Visit

[Elizabeth Todd Edwards \(Mr. Lincoln's White House\)](#)  
[Elizabeth Todd Grimsley \(Mr. Lincoln's White House\)](#)  
[Emilie Todd Helm \(Mr. Lincoln's White House\)](#)  
[Mary Todd Lincoln \(Mr. Lincoln's White House\)](#)

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## Museum pie memories o Lincoln's sw

By VICKI TILLIS  
Ledger news editor

Visitors to the Carnegie Historical Museum Sunday — Abraham Lincoln's birthday — should stop to look at the large wooden spinning wheel sitting in the back room of the museum.

The 196-year-old spinning wheel was once owned by Mary Ann Rutledge, the mother of Abraham Lincoln's fiancée Ann Rutledge.

Museum board member Gene Luedtke said the museum does not have many Lincoln pieces, but he is hoping to have a small display to commemorate the birthday of the 16th president of the United States.

Luedtke said according to an article published in a 1921 issue of *The Ledger*, Ann Rutledge was born Jan. 7, 1813, the daughter of James and Mary Miller Rutledge.

The Rutledge family owned a tavern in New Salem, Ill., where Lincoln lived and where he wooed Ann.

After moving to a farm several miles northwest of New Salem, 22-year-old Ann, who was engaged to Lincoln, and her father both died from typhoid fever. Ann died Aug. 25, 1835, and her father died shortly after.

According to the 1921 article, "The effect of her death on Lincoln at the time if not during his entire life has had much to do with making the love affair so much talked about."

In 1837, after the deaths of Ann and James, Mary Ann Rutledge moved with her three sons and three daughters to a farm three miles northwest of Birmingham.

One of the sons, Robert Rutledge, was sheriff of Van Buren County when Lincoln, out of regard for the Rutledge family, appointed him as provost marshal of the First Congressional District of Iowa during the Civil War. Later, he occupied a place of some prominence at the burial of Lincoln May 4, 1865, in the Lincoln Tomb at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Ill.

Another son, John Rutledge, inherited the family homestead and lived there until his death in 1879. He had belonged to the company Lincoln captained during the Black Hawk War.

The third son, William Rutledge, married and moved to Kansas.

Daughter Sara farmed land adjacent but on the Jefferson county line.

Daughter Nancy had a great moral force of much power in church." He died and sons moved to Ill.

It was at New Salem that Ann Rutledge died and was buried in the B. & N. cemetery northwest of Birmingham. The monument marks the site.

A few years later she had two living sons, Robert and William, who attended Parsons College.

It was while the sons were at Parsons that Ann Rutledge's sessions of the County.

The exact date ended up in the unknown, but the collection event was property of the Carnegie Museum, Luedtke said.

Mary Ann's grandfather, Prewitt, became a Presbyterian minister when the church was founded.

Grandson William for Judges Legg in Jefferson County later moved to Illinois.

Their mother is buried in the Fairfield and is in the Cemetery.

The 1921 newspaper became of Mary Jane.

Abraham Lincoln, 1809, in Kentucky is today. He moved he was 7 to Indiana was 21 to Illinois.



## Abraham Lincoln's mistaken engagement

By Rebecca Onion

Posted Monday, Nov. 12, 2012, at 7:10 AM ET

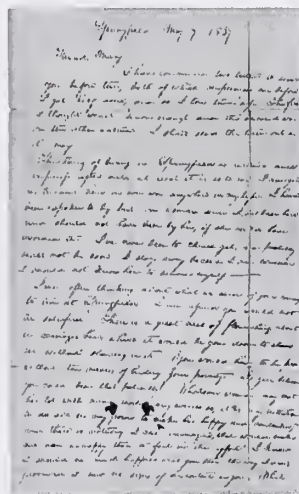
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### Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens: "It's Not You, It's Me"

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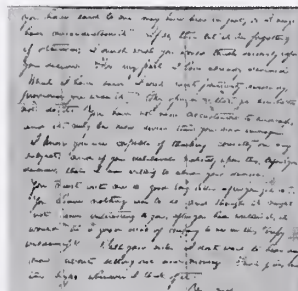
When he was a young and impoverished lawyer in Springfield, Ill., Abraham Lincoln had an awkward romantic entanglement with a wealthier Kentuckian named Mary Owens. Mary's sister, Elizabeth Abell, had been trying for years to make a match between the two (who had never met). In 1836, Lincoln told Abell—half in jest—that if Owens wanted to move to Illinois, he would marry her. This was a rash promise that, after spending more time with Owens, he began to regret. When he finally did propose to her, reluctantly, she unexpectedly rejected his suit.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History holds one of the three letters that Lincoln wrote to Owens before the proposal, as he struggled to resolve the situation with honor. In this one, dated May 7, 1837, Lincoln tries to convince Mary that she really wouldn't like living in Springfield as the wife of a man without much money. (Read a full transcript here.)



GLC 08085 Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens, May 7, 1837.  
(Courtesy of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.)

Springfield, he said, was simultaneously too much of a frontier town and too pretentious. "There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here," he wrote, "which it would be your doom to see without sharing in it." Anxious to drive the point home, he warned: "You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you now imagine."



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Lincoln's confused wafflings betray a man trying hard to understand Owens' position and react accordingly. He used many conditionals ("I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no discontent in you") and capped the letter off with the very romantic "What I have said I will most positively abide by, provided you wish it. My opinion is that you had better not do it."

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# The Fairfield Ledger

No. 27, Wednesday, February 8, 2006 ■ 50¢ ■ Fairfield, Iowa 52556 ■ E-mail: flledger@lisco.com ■ Web site: flledger.com

## Museum piece spins memories of Abraham Lincoln's sweetheart

By VICKI TILLIS  
Ledger news editor

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The Rutledge family owned a tavern in New Salem, Ill., where Lincoln lived and where he wooed Ann.

After moving to a farm several miles northwest of New Salem, 22-year-old Ann, who was engaged to Lincoln, and her father both died from typhoid fever. Ann died Aug. 25, 1835, and her father died shortly after.

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Another son, John Rutledge, inherited the family homestead and lived there until his death in 1879. He had belonged to the company Lincoln captained during the Black Hawk War.

The third son, William Rutledge, married and moved to Kansas.

Daughter Sarah married John Saunders, and they farmed land adjacent to the Rutledge and Prewitt farms, but on the Jefferson County side of the Van Buren-Jefferson county line. Later, she moved to California.

Daughter Nancy married Anthony Prewitt, "a man of great moral force in the community, was an exhorter of much power in the Cumberland Presbyterian church." He died in 1864, and his widow and sons moved to Birmingham.

It was at Nancy's home where Mary Ann Rutledge died at age 91 Dec. 26, 1878. The body is buried in the Bethel M. E. Cemetery four miles northwest of Birmingham and a substantial monument marks the grave.

A few years later, Nancy moved to Fairfield so her two living sons, McGrady and Will could attend Parsons College.

It was while the family lived in Fairfield that Mary Ann Rutledge's spinning wheel was added to the possessions of the Old Settlers Association of Jefferson County.

The exact details of how the spinning wheel ended up in the Old Settlers' collection are unknown, but many items from that collection eventually became the property of the Carnegie Historical Museum, Luedtke said.

Mary Ann's grandson "Grady" Prewitt became a minister in the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and later in the Presbyterian church when the two merged.

Grandon Will Prewitt was a court reporter for Judges Leggett, Roberts and Babb in Jefferson County for years. Both he and Grady later moved to California.

Their mother Nancy died in 1901 in Fairfield and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

The 1921 news article does not state what became of Mary Ann Rutledge's daughter Jane.

Abraham Lincoln was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Kentucky, where Hodgenville is today. He moved with his family when he was 7 to Indiana and again when he was 21 to Illinois.



term  
be  
fore he  
was  
elected  
president in  
1860.

As president, Lincoln oversaw the Civil War and abolished slavery. He was re-elected in 1864, when the end of the war was near, but he was shot by John Wilkes Booth the evening of April 14, 1865, while attending Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. He died the next morning, without having regained consciousness, in a boarding house

across the street from the theater.

JULIE JOHNSTON/Ledger photo

### Museum Hours

The Carnegie Historical Museum is open from 1-4 p.m. each Sunday. To reach the museum, enter the Carnegie Building on the ground floor and take the elevator to the third floor.



## Abraham Lincoln's mistaken engagement

By Rebecca Onion

Posted Monday, Nov. 12, 2012, at 7:10 AM ET

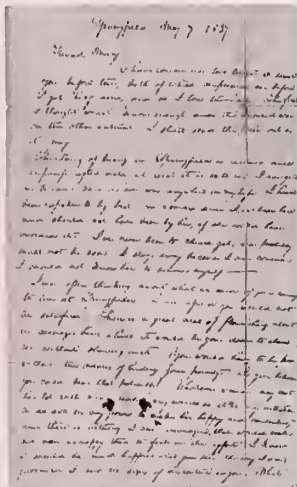
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### Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens: "It's Not You, It's Me"

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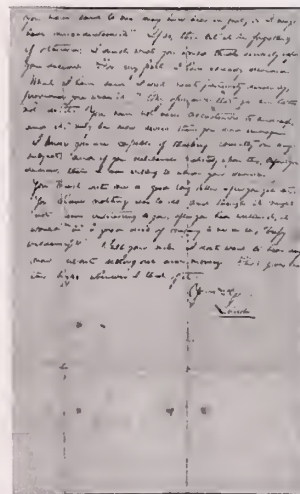
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## LINCOLN'S FIRST LOVE STORY



NCE President Lincoln, after sitting a long while with a pensive smile and a far-away look in his eyes, asked a friend:

"Did you ever write out a story in your mind? I did when I was a little codger. One day a wagon with a lady and two girls and a man broke down near us, and while they were fixing up, they cooked in our kitchen. The woman had books and read us stories, and they were the first of the kind I ever had heard. I took a great fancy to one of the girls; and when they were gone I thought of her a great deal, and one day when I was sitting out in the sun by the house, I wrote out a story in my mind. I thought I took my father's horse and followed the wagon, and finally I found it, and they were surprised to see me. I talked with the girl and persuaded her to elope with me; and that night I put her on my horse, and we started off across the prairie. After several hours we came to a camp; and when we rode up we found it was the one we had left a few hours before, and we went in.

"The next night we tried again, and the same thing happened—the horse came back to the same place; and then we concluded that we ought not to elope. I stayed until I had persuaded her father to give her to me. I always meant to write that story out and publish it, and I began once; but I concluded it was not much of a story.

"But I think that was the beginning of love with me."



"Sitting out in the sun by the house"





